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A COURSE OF PRAYER,

For each Day in the Week,

With

MEDITATIONS AND REMARKS

Suitable to every

Christian Family.

By the REV.D AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, A.B

— late Vicar of —

Broad Hembury Devon.

Fourth Edition.

1796

Printed for W. ROW, Great Marlborough Street,

and sold by

James Matthews, Strand. Walker Paternoster Row;

Barker Russell Court, & Wm. Pelham Boston New England.

— Price One Shilling, sewed. —

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THE PUBLISHER

TO THE

READER.

IT is preſumed, the firſt part of this little Manual of devotion, taken from the manuſcript papers of Mr. Toplady, will not be unacceptable to the public, becauſe it is ſet forth as a form of prayer. Amongſt the many unneceſſary diſputes in the Chriſtian department, a queſtion has been often propounded, Whether a perſon can preſent himſelf at the footſtool of the divine Majeſty, uſing the words of another, and be a ſincere worſhipper? Certainly, in our private or recluſe devotions, it is proper to come before God, and pour out in ſimplicity and ſincerity, the immediate ſolicitations, that

we

we are in need of, expecting our imperfect aſpirations to be accepted only in and through the mediation of the Lord Jeſus. But ſome indiſcreet captious individuals have prematurely cenſured thoſe, who have adopted a premeditated courſe of prayer in their families, or in public aſſemblies, as the quinteſſence of hypocriſy and the apathy of formality. By this criterion, may not the ſame ſuggeſtions be urged againſt the univerſality of ſinging pſalms or hymns? If ſuch poetic compoſitions, which conſiſt of prayer and thankſgiving, are uſed as a form, wherein can be the impropriety or inconſiſtency of a devout ſupplicant offering the ſame in proſe? How aſſuming muſt it be in any perſon to take upon himſelf the inquiſitorial part of prejudging the uprightneſs of another, and bearing down the honeſt efforts of an

an humble mind, before that period arrives, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be made known. Let us in the interval anticipate that eventful criſis, when we ſhall enter upon that ſtate, where there will be nothing to pray for, but every thing to be thankful for, where mental imperfections will be abſorbed in the luſtre of uncreated perfection, and every thing give place to unmingled and unalloyed adorations to God and the Lamb for ever.

Theſe devotional exerciſes have within a few months gone through three impreſſions, and have received the approbation of various Monthly Critics, and of ſeveral eminent religious characters. This fourth edition is ſent into the world, enriched with ſeveral intereſting extracts, from the ſame Author's writings. Many more might have been inſerted, but

but the limits of a few pages admit of only a ſmall ſelection. This compilation is intended for to compreſs in a ſmall compaſs the leading features of chriſtianity, and to exhibit the ſublimity of ſuch truths, that are of the utmoſt importance.

THE Publiſher cannot cloſe this page, without giving his ſuffrage to the memory of the Writer. His great genius, and extenſive erudition, held him out as an extraordinary character: but what ſhone moſt conſpicuous, were the graces of the ſpirit freely given him of God, ſo that he was enabled to defend the doctrines of faith, or the goſpel ſyſtem of truths, with an untrembling hand, and with an unfaltering tongue.

His regenerate heaven-born ſoul dwelt in a ſickly infirm body, from which he retired, after thirty-eight years reſidence, and may be ſaid to have died with the goſpel ſtandard in his hand.

W. ROW.

Great Marlborough Street,
Nov. 21, 1796.

A COURSE OF
FAMILY PRAYER,
FOR EACH DAY IN THE WEEK.

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, in the midſt of them.
Matth. xviii. 20.

Praying in the Holy Ghoſt. Jude 20.

And the ſmoke of the incenſe, which came up with the prayers of the ſaints, aſcended up before God, out of the angel's hand. Rev. viii. 4.

SUNDAY MORNING.

(The Collect, before reading the appointed portion of Scripture.)

THROUGH the riches of thy mercy, and by the power of thy ſuſtaining goodneſs, we are brought in ſafety, to ſee the light of another day, even the light of a new Lord's day, the beſt of days, the type of that glorious reſt, which remaineth for the people of God. Lord, ſend forth, and ſend down thy Holy Spirit into our hearts; and make thy ſabbath, a ſabbath-day, indeed, to each of our ſouls; a day of ſpiritual im-

 provement,

provement, heavenly conſolation, and near communion with thee: O ſatisfy us with thy mercy, and that right ſoon; ſo ſhall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our lives. Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us at this time; bleſs us to all the means of grace, whether public or private, in the uſe of which we wait for thy ſalvation: O let them not be as wells without water; but make them channels of divine influence, and effectual to the end for which thou haſt appointed them. We deſire to begin the Lord's day with the Lord, and to hallow it by the word of God and by prayer. Enable us, O thou Father of mercies, to keep it holy unto thee, and to enjoy ſaving communion with thee, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, *Amen.*

(Here let the family riſe from their ſupplicating poſture, and all being ſeated, let a ſelect portion of Holy Scripture be read; which ended, an hymn or pſalm may be ſung: after which, the maſter of the family may conclude as follows, either ſtanding or kneeling.) Let us pray.

OUR Father, which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

We thank thee, gracious God, for the return of the morning light, and for cauſing the day-ſpring to know its time and place. O may the day-ſtar from on high, viſit our benighted ſouls; and may that Saviour, who is the bright and morning ſtar, ariſe and ſhine within us with healing in his wings: glory be to thy goodneſs, that the light we ſee is the Lord's; that this is the day which thou haſt made for thyſelf, and ſet apart for thy name. May this ſabbath-day be an high day to our ſouls; a day of ſpiritual feaſting and heavenly joy; bring us, O bleſſed Spirit, into thy banqueting houſe, and let thy banner over us be love. Bleſſed be thy name, that we ſee ſo many of the days of the Son of man; that we enjoy ſo many precious opportunities of worſhipping thee in the beauty of holineſs, and of paying our vows unto thee publicly, in

the preſence of thy people. May we be in the Spirit on the Lord's day; and call the ſabbath a delight, holy of the Lord and honourable. May we ceaſe from our own works, as God on the ſeventh day ceaſed from his; and abound only in the work of the Lord. Eſpecially make it to us a ſabbath of reſt from ſin, and a ſabbath of reſt in God. We are, indeed, utterly unworthy of the honour, and unable for the work of a fellowſhip, with the Father, and with his Son, Jeſus Chriſt; but we come unto thee, O bleſſed Lamb of God, in thy own adorable name, who alone art worthy; and depend on the ſtrength and ſupply of thy good Spirit, to work all our works in us, and to ordain peace for us. Bleſs all thy miniſtring ſervants throughout the whole world, may they obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful; faithful to thee, faithful to truth, and faithful to the ſouls entruſted to their care. Particularly, vouchſafe to be with all thoſe who are this day to ſtand up in thy name, and preach the goſpel of thy grace. May they be mighty through thee, to convince the unconvinced, to convert the unconverted, to heal them that are of a contrite heart,

and

and to build up believers on their moſt holy faith. Enable them to preach thy truths with power, and with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven; thou thyſelf graciouſly working with them, and confirming the work with ſigns following: Be in the midſt of all thy worſhipping people, who ſhall aſſemble in thy name to-day. Have mercy on thoſe who ſhall be unwillingly detained from thy houſe, by ſickneſs, or any other providential impediment; comfort them in ſecret, ſanctify their abſence by granting them much of thy inward preſence. Let them that tarry at home, divide the ſpoil; and, as they are excluded from the ſtream, give them to drink the deeper at the fountain head. Lord, aſſiſt us, thy unworthy ſervants, in the religious ſervices of this day. Make us joyful in the houſe of prayer; when we wait upon thee for a renewal of our ſtrength, may we find our ſtrength indeed renewed; may we inwardly experience the grace of the means, while we attend on the means of grace; and enjoy a ſaving intercourſe with the God of ordinance, in frequenting the ordinances of God. Vouchſafe to take us and ours into thy gracious protection.

Bleſs and preſerve us in our going out and coming in. Support and ſtrengthen, direct and guard us; pardon our innumerable ſins, the depravity of our nature, and the offences of our lives; and ſanctify us to thyſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works, and ſeal us thine in body, ſoul and ſpirit, to the day of the Lord Jeſus. This day, gracious Lord, keep us in thy fear: let us not find our own pleaſure, nor do our own ways, nor ſpeak our own words; but live entirely to thee, converſe with thee, know more of thee, and grow up into a greater fitneſs for thy kingdom and glory. All we beg, O gracious Father, is, for thy mercy's ſake, in Jeſus Chriſt, our Saviour: for whom we bleſs thee, and to whom, with thyſelf and the Holy Ghoſt, we deſire to aſcribe, all might, majeſty, and praiſe, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Lord bleſs us and keep us; the Lord make his face to ſhine upon us, and be gracious to us, and give us peace, this day and ever more. *Amen.*

SUNDAY

SUNDAY EVENING.

(Collect before reading the Scripture.)

RECEIVE us graciouſly, O thou God of all mercy, though we be not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctuary: we truſt we can ſay, that our whole dependence is fixed on him, on that ever bleſſed Mediator, between God and men, in whom thou haſt declared thyſelf well pleaſed. Vouchſafe to cloath us with his righteouſneſs, and to ſprinkle both our hearts and our performances with his precious blood, which ſpeaketh better things, than that of Abel. Smile upon us, and be gracious to us, in this our private audience; may our petitions be received with favour at the throne of grace, and may an anſwer of peace be ſealed in our hearts. In this, and all other of our doings, may we be enabled to look unto thee for a bleſſing, and to receive the bleſſing at thy hand, through Jeſus Chriſt, our Saviour.

[After reading and ſinging, add]

Our Father, &c.

O thou

O thou that heareſt prayer, unto thee ſhall all fleſh come. Thou art the Lord, by whom we eſcape death, and enjoy all things pertaining to life and godlineſs. Thine we are, and thee we ought to ſerve. Thou haſt holden us up, ever ſince we were born: may our praiſe be always of thee. We thank thee for thy care over us, and thy favour toward us, this day, both in a way of providence, and in a way of grace. Leſs than the leaſt of all thy mercies, we are continually favoured with the greateſt: we, who deſerve juſtly to be forſaken of thee, and to be caſt out of the ſight of thine eyes, are yet ſpared hitherto, to be monuments of thy goodneſs, and of the love that paſſeth knowledge. Deareſt Father, impreſs our hearts with a lively and laſting ſenſe of what thou haſt done for us; and do thou crown all, by working in us that which is well-pleaſing in thy ſight. Give us unfeignedly repentance toward God, and ſaving faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Sprinkle us with his precious blood, from all the guilt of our ſins, both original and actual; cloath us with his righteouſneſs, unto juſtification; and grant us that ſanctification of thy ſpirit, without

without which, no man can ſee the Lord.——We deſire to be humbled in thy glorious preſence, for the ſins of this day; for the iniquity of our holy things; for our ſhort-comings, and our miſ-doings. Surely, all our perſonal righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags, in the eyes of thine infinite holineſs; and our beſt performances, if brought to the teſt of thy perfect law, would but add to our condemnation, and enhance our puniſhment. But thou art a God gracious and merciful, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin, through the ranſom thou haſt found, and the Lamb which thou haſt provided for a burnt-offering. Give us to ſee, that our guilt was transferred to him; that his obedience is imputed to us; and that we are, through grace, intereſted in all the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant. To the care and protection of thy almighty providence would we humbly commend ourſelves this night. Take charge of us and our's, O thou Keeper of Iſrael, who never ſlumbereſt nor ſleepeſt, watch over us for good. When we ſleep, let our hearts wake and our ſouls lie open to the influence of thy bleſſed Spirit: keep

us

us without ſin, by the power of thy grace. If we have received any ſpiritual improvement to-day, Lord grant that it may abide with us, and increaſe with us ever more and more. Let it not be as the morning-dew, that quickly paſſes away; but faſten thy word upon our hearts, as a nail in a ſure place. Cheriſh every motion of thy good ſpirit; begin the work of grace, where it is not yet begun; and carry it on with power, where it is. May our penitence be deep and laſting; may our faith be ſtrong, lively and fervent; and build us up into living habitations of thee the living God. Sanctify and ſeal us thine, in body, ſoul, and ſpirit. Sprinkle, according to thy own moſt gracious promiſe, clean water upon us, that we may be clean; from all our filthineſs, and from all our idols, do thou cleanſe us: a new heart alſo do thou give unto us, and a new ſpirit do thou put within us: take, O take away the ſtony heart out of our fleſh, and give us hearts of fleſh: put thy ſpirit within us, and cauſe us to walk in thy ſtatutes, and to keep thy judgments and do them. May we, from principles of faith in thee, and love to thee, be careful to maintain good works; and go on from

ſtrength

ſtrength to ſtrength, until we are called to appear before the God of gods in Sion: there to celebrate that never-ending Sabbath, which angels and arch-angels, with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, are now enjoying before the throne. With them, may we ſee thee as thou art; with them, may we caſt our crowns before thee; and ſing the praiſes of the great Three-one, of the Father who loved us, of the Son who waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and of the eternal Spirit who ſanctified us by his grace, and preſerved us to the day of Chriſt. Whatever we aſk, we aſk it at thy hand, for the merit's ſake of thy dear Son, our only Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

The Lord bleſs us, and keep us, &c.

MONDAY MORNING.

(The Collect, before reading the Scripture.)

OPEN our eyes, O Lord, that we may diſcern the wonders of thy law; and rejoice our hearts with the knowledge of thy love. Take away our iniquities, and receive us graciouſly.

Be

Be light to our darkneſs, wiſdom to our folly, and manifeſt thy ſtrength in our weakneſs. Remember us according to the favour which thou beareſt to thy own people; ſtir us up to ſeek thy face, and to lay hold on thy covenant; and make us find that it is indeed good for us to draw nigh unto thee, and to wait upon thee, in and through the name and merits of Jeſus Chriſt our only Mediator and Advocate.

[The Scripture being read, and a Pſalm ſung, add as follows,]

Our Father, &c.

Gracious and glorious Lord, the eyes of all wait upon thee; thou art the hope of all the ends of the earth. In thee we live and move and have our being: thou giveſt us life, and breath, and all things. Still thou takeſt care of us, and watcheſt over us; even in the hours of ſleep, when we are unable to care for ourſelves. And thy mercies are daily renewed; thy goodneſs is repeated every morning: yea, every moment, doſt thou give us freſh occaſion of praiſe and thankſgiving. Bleſſed be thy name, for the peace, reſt, and ſafety of the night paſt. Enable us, in the ſtrength of thy grace

grace and of thy gifts, to love thee truly, to ſerve thee faithfully, and to depend on thee without wavering. In all our ways, may we acknowledge thee; and be thou graciouſly pleaſed to eſtabliſh our goings, and to direct our path. We deſire to put ourſelves under thy gracious conduct and thy fatherly protection. We beg the heavenly guidance, bleſſing, and aſſiſtance of thy good ſpirit, to chuſe our inheritance for us, and to diſpoſe of us, and all that concerns us, to the glory of thy great name. O Lord, withdraw not thy tender mercies from us, neither ſhut up thy loving kindneſs in diſpleaſure. Though we deſerve to loſe thy favour and thy preſence, yet grant us the comfort of thy help, and the joy of thy ſalvation, and uphold us with thy free ſpirit. Puniſh not our paſt offences, by leaving us to ourſelves, and giving us up to the dominion of our ſins; but give us penitent hearts for all the evil committed by us, and thy merciful diſcharge from all the guilt that lies upon us. And grant us, O good Lord, the comfortable ſenſe and apprehenſion of thy free acceptance of us, and of thy gracious intentions towards us, in the Son of thy love, the

lover of our ſouls; that our hearts may bleſs thee, and all that is within us may praiſe thy holy name.—Lord, keep us from ſin this day. Subdue, as well as pardon, our iniquities: and herein may we exerciſe ourſelves, to have always a conſcience void of offence, both towards God and towards man.—Whilſt upon earth, grant us a due ſupply of all things needful for us in the houſe of our pilgrimage. Sanctify to us our enjoyments and our employments, our comforts and our croſſes, every condition we are to be in, and every event that ſhall befall us. Enable us to live to thy honour and glory: and make us to paſs through things temporal, as neither to loſe nor forget the things eternal. If thou enlighten us not, we ſhall run into error; if thou prevent not, we ſhall relapſe into ſin; if thou preſerve us not, we ſhall fall into dangers. O let thy good providence be our defence and ſecurity; and thy Holy Spirit be our comforter, guide, and counſellor, in all our ways: until, through the merits of thy Son, and the multitude of thy mercies, we are called away, to be for ever with the Lord. *Amen.*

MONDAY

MONDAY EVENING.

(Collect before reading the Scripture.)

TEACH us, O Lord, the way of thy ſtatutes, and make us keep it unto the end. Incline our hearts to thy teſtimonies, and cauſe us to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein is our deſire. May the law of thy mouth be dearer unto us, than thouſands of gold and ſilver; and let thy Holy Spirit accompany thy word with ſaving power to our ſouls, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

(After reading, and ſinging, add as follows,)

Our Father, &c.

Infinitely great, and infinitely gracious God, thy glory exceeds our utmoſt thoughts, and thy mercies are over all thy works. We, thy ſinful creatures, have particular reaſon to admire and adore, not only thy patience, which bears with us, notwithſtanding all that we have done againſt thee; but likewiſe thy never ceaſing bounty, by which our comforts are continued, and our wants

ſupplied. We deſire to approach thee, as our kind and merciful Father in Jeſus Chriſt: humbly beſeeching thee, to waſh away our ſins in his moſt precious blood; and to give us a ſufficient meaſure of thy grace and Holy Spirit, to enable us againſt them. Thou didſt create man, O Lord, after thy own bleſſed image; but we have deſtroyed ourſelves, and come ſhort of thy glory: the crown is fallen from our heads, and woe unto us, for we are ſinners both by nature and by practice: juſtly mighteſt thou ſwear in thy wrath, that we ſhall not enter into thy reſt. Yet ſuffer us, and enable us, to plead, in faith, thy gracious promiſe, that whoſoever truſteth in the Saviour thou haſt provided, and come unto thee by him, ſhall never periſh, nor fall into condemnation, but have everlaſting life for his ſake. Lord, we would believe; O help our unbelief! and work in us that unfeigned repentance towards God, and that right faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that we may be of the number of them that do indeed repent and believe to the ſaving of the ſoul. Save us, O good Lord, from our ſinful ſelves; and from the love of the preſent evil world; and from every

every thing that oppoſes thy grace, and tends to hurt our ſouls. Stabliſh us in thy love; ſtrengthen us to perform thy will; and ſettle our faith on Chriſt, the rock of ages.—To thy mercy in him we would humbly commit ourſelves this night. Be our ſun, to enlighten us; be our ſhield, to defend us. Grant us, if it pleaſe thee, reſt of body, and peace of mind. Let the voice of joy, health, and ſafety, be heard in our dwelling: make our walls, ſalvation; and our gates, praiſe.—Comfort all, who want the comforts we enjoy: and grant ſuitable ſupplies of mercy, both ſpiritual and temporal, to all the afflicted, whereſoever they are, and howſoever tried.—Remember, with the favour that thou beareſt to thy people, all our abſent friends and relations: be thou a friend to them, and may they ſtand in a covenant relation to thee. Make them and us ſuch as thou wouldeſt have us, and as ſuch as thou wilt accept of in Chriſt Jeſus, here to thy gracious favour, and hereafter to thy glorious kingdom. Hear us, O God of the ſpirits of all fleſh! Hear us, in behalf of ourſelves and others; hear others, in behalf of themſelves and us:

and convert thoſe, who pray neither for others nor themſelves. Above all, hear the Son of thy love, the lover of our ſouls, who intercedes, we truſt, for us, at thy right hand. For him, and to him, with thyſelf, and the bleſſed ſpirit, enable us to aſcribe everlaſting praiſe and glory. *Amen.*

TUESDAY MORNING.

(Collect, before reading the Scripture.)

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts are open, all deſires known, and from whom no ſecrets are hid; vouchſafe, at this time, to cleanſe the thoughts of our hearts by the inſpiration of thy Holy Spirit: that we may perfectly love thee, worthily magnify thy holy name, and offer thee a ſacrifice in righteouſneſs, acceptable to thy glorious Majeſty, in and through Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord. *Amen.*

[After reading, and ſinging, add as follows.]

Our Father, &c.

Bleſſed Lord, thine we are, and thee we

we ought to ſerve. The obligations of thy law, and the endearments of thy love, render it our indiſpenſable duty to be faithful in the covenant, and to abound in the work of the Lord. But, alas! we are unprofitable ſervants, and worſe than unprofitable; for we have drank in iniquity like water, our provocations againſt thee are increaſed, and our treſpaſſes are grown up unto the heavens. We have lived to ourſelves, inſtead of living unto him who died for us and roſe again; we have not, as we ſhould, glorified thee in our bodies and in our ſpirits, which are thine.—And ſince it is not in man to recover and ſave himſelf, O enable us to look unto thee, in whom alone our help lies. We thank thee, for laying help upon one that is mighty; for committing thy people, and the work of their ſalvation, to the hands of him who hath finiſhed tranſgreſſion, made reconciliation for the iniquity of them that believe, and brought out and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, for their juſtification. In his name, we come to thy throne of grace, hoping to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need: for his ſake, we humbly

intreat

intreat thy favour and the light of thy countenance; begging thee to be reconciled to us, and to be at peace with us, as a Father of mercies, and a God of conſolation. And, Lord, enable us to walk as becomes thoſe upon whom thy name is called. May we be followers of Chriſt, as dear children, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. O circumciſe our hearts, to love the Lord our God: and may thy Almighty Spirit ſo write the law of holineſs upon our minds, that it may be our meat and our drink to do thy will; that we may hate all iniquity, and every falſe way; and reſemble the bleſſed Jeſus, as our pattern, while we truſt in his merits as our propitiation. Lord, make our ſervice acceptable to thee, while we live; and our ſouls ready for thee, when we die. As long as we are in the world, keep us from the evil of it, and from the ſnares and dangers, to which we are continually expoſed, in our paſſage through it. O make our pilgrimage ſafe and ſure through all the troubles, changes, and temptations of this mortal life, to the unchangeable glories and felicities of the life everlaſting. Be merciful to us this

this day. Keep us in all our ways, bleſs all our lawful undertakings, and grant that we may take nothing in hand, but what is warranted by thy word, and agreeable to thy will concerning us. Set thy fear before our eyes, all the day long; and put thy love into our hearts, that we may not depart from thee. Bleſs and preſerve us in our going out and coming in. May the angel of thy preſence ſave us from all ſin and danger. Hear and anſwer us, O Lord, for the ſake of him who hath loved and redeemed us, even the Lord our righteouſneſs, to whom be aſcribed the kingdom and power and glory. *Amen.*

The bleſſing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us, and all that belong to us, this day, and evermore. *Amen.*

TUESDAY EVENING.

[*The Collect, before reading the Scripture.*]

O LORD, thou art good unto them that wait for thee, and to the ſoul that ſeeketh thee. We deſire, at this time,

time, to wait for thee, and to wait upon thee; and to ſeek thee in the way of thy appointment. Give us a token for good, and an anſwer of peace, while we draw near unto thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, our only Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

[After reading, and ſinging, add as follows.]

Our Father, &c.

How excellent is thy mercy, O God! and what encouragement doſt thou give us to put our truſt under the ſhadow of thy wings! thou art the bountiful giver of the good that our ſouls deſire, and the merciful withholder of the evil that our ſins deſerve. From thee comes all our help; and in thee make us repoſe all our hope. We acknowledge thy great and daily goodneſs to us; and our own abſolute unworthineſs of the leaſt of all thy mercies. We deſire to take ſhame and confuſion to ourſelves, that we have ſo little improved, and ſo greatly abuſed, thy patience with us, and the various inſtances of thy bounty toward us. Thy very mercies help to aggravate the heavy reckoning of our offences; becauſe we have done ſo much

much againſt thee, after all the great things thou haſt done, and art continually doing, for us. We would, O Lord, be penitent and humbled for our ſins; and intreat thy gracious favour in Jeſus Chriſt for the pardon of them. Forgive us, we pray thee, for his blood and righteouſneſs ſake; abſolve us from all the evil, of which we ſtand guilty before thee; and, being juſtified by faith, grant us peace with God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. And as we pray, that thou wilt be to us a Father of mercies, and a God of conſolation; ſo alſo that thou wouldſt make us followers of thee, as dear children. Work in us, by thy Holy Spirit, that which is well pleaſing in thy ſight. Lord, thou knoweſt our weakneſs, and the temptations to which we are expoſed: our danger from the enemy of ſouls; and from the preſent world, which is full of ſnares; and, above all, from the enemy within, our vile fleſh and deceitful hearts, ſo apt to betray us into ſin. We pray, therefore, that thou wilt arm us with the whole armour of God; and uphold us with thy free ſpirit; and watch over us for good evermore. O make us experience the

ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt aids of thy heavenly grace; that we may never fall a prey to the ſpiritual adverſary that ſeeks to devour us. And ſeeing thou art yet pleaſed to hold our ſouls in life, and to make us find and feel, by every day's experience, how gracious and merciful thou art; give us hearts more ſenſible of thy love to us, more enflamed with love to thee, and more thankful for the bleſſings which thou art pleaſed to multiply upon us. And cauſe us to ſhew forth thy praiſe, not only by ſpeaking good of thy name, but by ordering our converſations as becomes the goſpel of Chriſt. To thy mercy in him do we humbly commend ourſelves and ours this night: beſeeching thee to viſit us with thy ſalvation, and, to preſerve us, in ſoul and body, from all evils and dangers to which the weakneſs of our frame, and the greatneſs of our ſins, expoſe us. May our repoſe be holy, ſafe, and refreſhing; that we may riſe again better fitted and enabled to ſerve thee according to thy will, in the duties of the following day, if it ſhould be thy pleaſure to make addition of another day to our lives. And as thou addeſt days and mercies, add repentance and amendment

amendment to our days; that, in proportion as we draw nearer to the grave, our ſouls may grow fitter for heaven. And for all the good things that we have had, and ſtill have, and yet hope for at thy hands, to thy adorable name be all the praiſe, O Father, Son, and Spirit, world without end. *Amen.*

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

[*Collect, before reading the Scripture.*]

UNTO thee do we lift up our eyes, O thou that dwelleſt in the heavens. Have reſpect, we humbly beſeech thee, both to us and to our offerings, for the ſake of him who offered up himſelf for our offences, and roſe again for our juſtification. Meet us with a bleſſing, who deſire to meet thee in prayer; and make thy throne a throne of grace to us, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. *Amen.*

[After reading, and ſinging, add]

Our Father, &c.

Lord God, bountiful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in good-

neſs and truth; thou keepeſt mercy for thouſands, thou pardoneſt iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin; neither doſt thou retain thy anger for ever, becauſe thou delighteſt in mercy. Look down, O Lord, upon us, who would now be looking up to thee; and be favourable to us, as thou uſeſt to be unto thoſe that fear thy name. Look not upon the ſin of our nature; nor the ſins of our hearts and lives; which are more than we can number, and greater than we can expreſs. O ſprinkle us from an evil conſcience, by the application of the bleſſed Redeemer's blood which cleanſeth from all ſin. And, ſeeing there is, in him, an infinite fulneſs of all that ever we can want, or wiſh, to render us holy, and to make us happy; grant us to receive, out of his fulneſs, grace ſufficient for us: grace to pardon our ſins, and ſubdue our iniquities; to juſtify our perſons, and to ſanctify our ſouls. Begin, or carry on, the new creation within; advance in us that ſaving change of heart, which may, by the power of thy ſpirit, more and more transform us into thy bleſſed image, and make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. And now,

now, that we are entered upon another day, we beſeech thee to carry us through it in thy fear and favour. Order all our ſteps in thy word, and let no wickedneſs have dominion over us. Teach us to uſe the world, without abuſing it; and may that portion of it which thou haſt and ſhall aſſign us, be ſanctified to us, by the word of God, and by prayer; and by the right employment and improvement of it to thy glory. Whatever we are without, O leave us not deſtitute of the things that accompany ſalvation: but ſatisfy us with the ſenſe of thy favour, and adorn us with the graces of thy Holy Spirit. Bleſſed be thy rich goodneſs, which has renewed our lives and thy mercies to us this morning. Lord, grant that all our comforts may flow to us in the channel of covenant love; and revert to the praiſe and glory of the gracious giver. Be with, protect, and bleſs us, in our going out and coming in. May the angel of thy preſence ſave us, and the God of angels be our ſhield and exceeding great reward. Make us deſire, reſolve, and endeavour, to live in the obedience of thy holy will, and to the honour of thy bleſſed

name. O reſtrain us from the evils and follies, into which we are prone to fall; and quicken us to the offices and duties we ought to perform. Grant that we may think and ſpeak, will and do, the things that are well-pleaſing in thy ſight; and have the ſtrong conſolation of acceptance with thee. So viſit us with thy ſalvation, ſanctify us by thy grace, and ſo carry us through life, that thy name may have the praiſe, and our ſouls the comfort, in the hour of death, and in the great day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

The Lord bleſs us and keep us, &c.

WEDNESDAY EVENING.

[*Collect, before reading the Scripture.*]

PREVENT us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy moſt gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help; that, in this, and all other our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy name; offer thee acceptable ſervice; and finally by thy mercy, obtain everlaſting life;

life; through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. *Amen.*

[After reading, and ſinging, add]

Our Father, &c.

Enable us, gracious God, to deſire thee, as our chiefeſt good; and to come to thee, as our merciful Father, in the Son of thy love. In his great name, and prevailing mediation, alone, it is, that we, who have multiplied our offences againſt thee, are encouraged ſtill to preſent our perſons and our prayers before thee. We are utterly unworthy to approach thy foot-ſtool, and to enjoy the privilege of intercourſe with thee. We durſt not appear in the preſence of thy holy, glorious Majeſty, in our own names, or truſting in our own ſinful righteouſneſs; our guilt is ſo great, and our iniquities ſo grievous, that we might juſtly be aſhamed to come before thy face, and to tremble for fear of thy judgments. We would therefore fly for refuge to the merits of him, who we truſt, has fully ſatisfied thy juſtice for our ſins, and is now interceding at thy right hand for our ſouls: whom thou delighteſt to honour, in

ſparing, accepting, and ſaving poor unworthy ſinners, upon his account. Deliver us, moſt gracious Lord, for his ſake, from all thoſe tranſgreſſions, for which our hearts condemn us; and from all, of which thou that art greater than our hearts, knoweſt us to be guilty: and ſeal to us a full pardon in his moſt precious blood, which ſpeaketh better things on our behalf, than we are able to do for ourſelves in all our prayers. And may the time paſt of our lives ſuffice to have lived to ourſelves, and to have ſerved our own corrupt wills. O put an end to all our preſumptuous and treacherous dealings with thy heavenly all-ſeeing Majeſty: and create in us new and clean, humble and contrite hearts, to tremble at thy word and preſence, and to hate and abandon all our fooliſh and ſinful miſdoings. Command thy bleſſing, and thy ſaving grace, to deſcend and reſt upon the ſouls here before thee. Cauſe us to know the joyful ſound of thy goſpel, not only by the hearing of the ear, but in the channel of heavenly experience. O take poſſeſſion of our hearts, and by the power of thy ſpirit, draw up our affections

affections to thy bleſſed ſelf. Grant us union and communion with thee; ſuch a ſight and ſenſe of ſin, and of our loſt eſtate by nature, as may render Chriſt and his righteouſneſs precious to us; and ſuch comfortable views of our juſtification through him, as may enlarge our hearts with joy, fill our lips with praiſe, and influence us to live unto him that died for us and roſe again.—Lord, guide and keep us; make us wiſe and faithful in our ſeveral duties, and bleſſed and proſperous in the event. Sanctify our reſpective conditions to us, and fit us for whatever thou ſhalt pleaſe to call us to. —And now, O Lord, we beſeech thee to accept our evening ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving for the mercies of the day paſt, and for thy unwearied goodneſs which has followed us all the days of our lives. Go on to abound toward us in loving kindneſs and tender mercies; paſſing by our innumerable ſins, and ſupplying our every want. Take charge of us to night. Hide us in thy pavilion, and compaſs us about with ſongs of deliverance. Whether we ſleep or wake, keep us ſafe under thy wings, and may our hearts be occupied

cupied in thy ſtatutes. Bring us, at the appointed ſeaſon, to the heavenly city, where there is no darkneſs, but the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And for all thy patience with us, thy care over us, and thy continual mercy to us, bleſſed be thy name, O Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

THURSDAY MORNING.

[*Collect, before reading the Scripture.*]

THOU, O God, art praiſed in Sion. Angels and archangels, ſaints below and ſaints above, the whole family of thy elect, both in heaven and earth, worſhip thee, the fountain of all bleſſedneſs, and the giver of all good. We, likewiſe, the chief, but not the leaſt favoured, of ſinners, deſire to join the company of thy redeemed, and to offer up our ſpiritual ſacrifices. Accept, great God, the mite we bring; pardon the iniquity that cleaves to our duties; meet us with a bleſſing; and receive us graciouſly, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

[After

[After reading, and ſinging, add]

Our Father, &c.

O thou, who haſt borne ſo long with us, and done ſo much for us; of whom alone cometh our ſalvation, and by whom we eſcape death! moved by the ſenſe of our own neceſſities, and encouraged by the daily experience of thy mercies, we deſire ſtill to ſhelter ourſelves under the ſhadow of thy wings, and to continue our ſupplications at the throne of thy grace: moſt humbly intreating thee, who faſhioneſt the hearts of the ſons of men, that thou wouldſt prepare our hearts to come into thy ſacred preſence, and to call upon thy bleſſed name. O pour down upon us the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications; yea, let thy good ſpirit help our infirmities, and teach us how to pray. We, who are but poor worms, and ſinful duſt and aſhes, have taken upon us to ſpeak to thee, the Sovereign Majeſty of heaven and earth: we, who have too much cauſe to fear, leſt our great and manifold ſins might provoke thee to hide thy face from us, and to ſhut up thy loving kindneſs in diſpleaſure againſt us. Lord, be merciful

to

to us ſinners; for the ſake of him whom thou haſt exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto his people, and forgiveneſs of ſins. Heal our ſouls, which have greatly ſinned againſt thee: heal our backſlidings, and love us freely: take away our ungodlineſs, and thou ſhalt find none. Renew us daily, unto repentance; eſtabliſh our hearts in thy faith and fear; and hold up our goings in thy paths, that our foot-ſteps ſlip not. Make us, in the ſtrength of grace, go on from conquering to conquer, all the enemies of our ſouls, and all the hinderances of our ſalvation, until thou haſt bruiſed Satan under our feet.

We bleſs thee for the mercies of the night. We laid us down to ſleep, and have riſen again, for thou haſt ſuſtained us, and made us to dwell in ſafety. May we ever experience the comfort of thy protection, and the help of thy ſalvation! may we find thee to be indeed a God of pardon, a God of ſanctification, and a God of preſervation!—Diſpoſe of us, we beſeech thee, and of all that concerns us, this day, to the glory of thy name. Keep us, at all times, in all places, and in all companies,

panies, from the evil of ſin, and from all other evils to which the greatneſs of our ſins make us liable. And take thou, O heavenly Father, the charge, guidance, and government of us; lead us by thy counſel, until thou haſt brought us to thy kingdom and glory; and, in the mean while, ſanctify to us all thy dealings with us, and ſeal us thine to the day of redemption; for the ſake of thy tender mercies, and the abundant merits of Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed Mediator and Redeemer.

The Lord bleſs us, &c.

THURSDAY EVENING.

[*Collect, before reading the Scripture.*]

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts are open, all deſires known, and from whom no ſecrets are hid; vouchſafe, at this time, to cleanſe the thoughts of our hearts, by the inſpiration of thy Holy Spirit; that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

[Reading,

[Reading, and ſinging, being ended, add]

Our Father, &c.

O Lord, the infinite, incomprehenſible God; thou haſt heaven for thy throne, and earth for thy foot-ſtool; and all things are in thy ſight, and at thy diſpoſal. Thou art the ſearcher of our hearts, and the overſeer of our lives, here and every where preſent. Thou compaſſeſt our path and our lying down, and art acquainted with all our ways. Lord, put our hearts into an holy frame, fit to attend upon thy glorious, all-ſeeing Majeſty. Work in us, by the power of thy grace, that change, which we cannot work in ourſelves: for, of ourſelves, we are equally vile and helpleſs. We were born ſinners, and ſinners we have lived and continued, and, by continually adding ſin to ſin, we have made ourſelves ſtill more the children of wrath, than we even were by nature. Juſtly mightſt thou withdraw thy tender mercies from us, and pour out thy wrath and indignation upon us to the uttermoſt; making us to find and feel, by woful experience, what an evil and bitter thing it is, to depart from thee the living

living God: but thy patience is wonderful, thy goodneſs is infinite, and, as is thy Majeſty, ſo is thy mercy. We therefore humbly beſeech thee to ſtretch forth the hand of thy power and grace, which alone is able to ſet us at liberty, who are tied and bound with the chain of our ſins. Call us effectually, and we ſhall come unto thee; draw us, and we ſhall run after thee. Cauſe us to feel, to abhor, and to forſake our iniquities: and, O! give us a well-grounded apprehenſion, and a comfortable perſuaſion, of our being juſtified freely by thy grace through the redemption that is in Jeſus.—And, for his ſake, vouchſafe us the ſanctification of thy ſpirit, to transform us into thy image, by the renewing of our minds, and to enable us for all the duties of thy ſervice. Perfect, O Lord, that which concerneth us: and make us ſuch, both in our hearts and lives, that we may enjoy thy peace below, and be meet for the inheritance of thy heavenly glory above. Satisfy us with thy favour; and grant us the reviving ſenſe of thy gracious acceptance of us, and of thy merciful intentions toward us. Speak peace to our conſciences;

ſay, to each of our ſouls, "I am thy "ſalvation:" that we may rejoice in thee as our God, and reſt upon thee as our reconciled Father in Jeſus Chriſt. And as thou haſt been good and kind to us through the day paſt (for which, and for the mercies of all our days, we would thankfully admire thy love, and bleſs thy name); ſo we beg that we may experience the continuance of thy gracious goodneſs to us, and of thy fatherly care over us, this preſent night. Preſerve and defend, bleſs and keep us, that no evil may happen to us, nor any plague come nigh our dwelling. Do thou, who giveſt, unto thy beloved, ſleep, vouchſafe to favour us with ſuch needful repoſe, as may refreſh and ſtrengthen us for thy ſervice and our reſpective duties. Prepare us, great God, for the final ſleep of death, and for the account we muſt ſhortly give at the judgment ſeat of Chriſt. When our ſouls are required of us, and we are uncloathed of the body, grant that we may not be found ſpiritually naked: unſprinkled with the blood of thy Son, uncloathed with the robe of his juſtifying righteouſneſs, nor unadorned with the graces of thy ſanctifying ſpirit.

O cauſe

O cauſe us, in this our day (the day of life, the only ſeaſon of preparation), to know, and to follow after, the things pertaining to our everlaſting peace, before they are hid from our eyes, and ere death makes us wiſe too late. Accompliſh the work of thy grace upon our hearts, and cauſe us to finiſh the work thou haſt given us to do: that whenever thou ſhalt be pleaſed to ſend for us away, we may have nothing to do, but to depart in peace, according to thy word, to fly at the ſignal—to quit the body, with chearfulneſs—and with faith, and, without dread, reſign our ſpirits into thy gracious hands; truſting in the riches of thy grace, and the ſaving merits of thy bleſſed Son. And, for all that he has ſo wonderfully effected to recover us, and to obtain eternal redemption for us; for whatever good thou haſt wrought in us, and for the hope of glory thou haſt given us: to thy name, O bleſſed God of our ſalvation, be the praiſe and honour, now and for ever. *Amen.*

FRIDAY MORNING.

[*Collect, before reading the Scripture.*]

BY thee, O Lord, alone, it is, that we laid us down in peace, and are riſen in ſafety. May the lives, which thy goodneſs renews every morning, and thy providence preſerves every moment, be devoted to thee; and, as a father ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him, ſo may the Lord, our God, continue to have mercy upon us, through Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed mediator and redeemer.

[Reading, and ſinging ended, add]

O Lord, we deſire to adore thy name, which is excellent in all the earth, and whoſe glory is above the heavens. Thou art the maker and diſpoſer of all things: and for thy ſovereign pleaſure it is, that they ſtill exiſt, and were at firſt created. Thy hands have made and faſhioned us: and all that we enjoy comes from thee. As we are the workmanſhip of thy power, O make us likewiſe thy ſpiritual workmanſhip, created anew in Chriſt Jeſus, unto holineſs and true righteouſneſs. Give proof

proof that thou haſt formed us for thyſelf, by cauſing us to ſhew forth thy praiſe; and by making us live to thy glory, as we do every day live upon thy bounty. But, Lord, we have not yielded thee that glory, which thou haſt made us capable of, and ſo many ways obliged us to. We are prone to forget thee, who art never unmindful of us; and to diſobey thee, whoſe goodneſs to us is unwearied. For theſe things, O Lord, for the ſinfulneſs of our nature and of our lives, we deſire to pour out our hearts, and to humble our guilty ſelves before thee: entreating thee, for the ſake of thy dear Son, and of thy mercies in him, to work in us true repentance, and to grant us full and free forgiveneſs. Strengthen us, O Lord, with might, by thy ſpirit, in the inner man, to make us watchful againſt, and victorious over, the corruptions of our hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the ſinful cares and allurements of the world. O deſtroy in us every root of bitterneſs, every plant which thy grace hath not planted; exterminate every vicious habit and rebellious motion, which exalts itſelf againſt the knowledge of

God, and againſt the obedience of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Increaſe and confirm in us, more and more, thy faith, and fear, and love. Let not one grace of thy Holy Spirit be wanting: let not one be weak: but grant us ſuch manifeſtations of thyſelf, and ſo conform us to the image of thy holineſs, that our lives may be comfortable to ourſelves, profitable to others, and bring glory to thy great name. May we ſtill be found in the way of duty, fearing God and working righteouſneſs; making it evident unto all, that we have indeed been with Jeſus; that we have learned of him; that we are influenced by his ſpirit; guided by his example; and are preſſing forward to his kingdom. Day by day would we magnify thee, O Lord, and worſhip thy name for ever, world without end; who crowneſt every day with thy tender mercies. We bleſs thee for the reſt, protection, and preſervation, of the laſt night. O cauſe us to hear of thy loving kindneſs in the morning, for in thee do we truſt: make us to know the way wherein we ſhould go, for we lift up our ſouls unto thee. Caſt us not away from thy preſence; take not thy Holy Spirit

Spirit from us: but direct our hearts into thy love, and our feet into the way of thy teſtimonies. Whether we eat, or drink, or whatſoever we do, may we do all to the glory of God, and walk, as ſeeing him that is inviſible.—Command thy angels to encamp around us, and to bear us in their hands: and may their God and ours be the ſtrength of our hearts, the guide of our goings, and our portion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FRIDAY EVENING.

[*Collect, before reading the Scripture.*]

BLESSED are they, O Lord, who dwell in thy houſe, and bleſſed is the houſe where thou dwelleſt: bleſſed is the man whoſe ſtrength is in thee, and in whoſe heart are thy ways. May that bleſſedneſs be our's, and may the Lord, whom we ſeek, viſit us with his preſence, and rejoice us with the tokens of his love, in and through his adorable Son, and our adorable Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

[Reading and ſinging ended, add]
Our Father, &c.

O Lord, we deſire to ſeek thy face, and to wait upon thee in the duties of thy worſhip. To whom ſhould we make our applications, but unto thee, the father of mercies, and the fountain of all goodneſs, who art able to do exceeding abundantly for us, even above all that we are able to aſk or think: O let our prayer be ſet forth in thy ſight as incenſe; and may the lifting up of our hands and hearts be a ſpiritual evening ſacrifice, acceptable to thee, in the ſon of thy love. It is in his bleſſed name alone, that we dare to requeſt of thee all that thou knoweſt to be needful and expedient for us: ſeeing that there is in us no good thing to recommend us to thy favour and acceptance; but, on the contrary, a proneneſs and inclination to what is diſpleaſing unto thee, and deſtructive to our ſouls. For, beſides that we are, by nature, children of wrath, and a ſeed of evil doers; we have been daily adding to the heavy ſcore of our offences againſt thee. There is nothing in us, O Lord, but what may provoke thee to reject us; for all our very righteouſneſs themſelves are filthy rags: but there is enough, in thy beloved Son, of all grace

grace and goodneſs, to make thee well-pleaſed with us for his ſake. He who knew no ſin, bore our ſins, and was made a ſin offering, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us near unto thee. For his ſake, blot out our manifold tranſgreſſions, apply the benefits of thy ſalvation to our conſciences, that we may be enabled to walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: haſten thy coming and kingdom, that we, with all thy redeemed, may join in aſcribing ſongs of praiſe to a triune God, for ever and ever. To the care and protection of thy almighty providence would we humbly commend ourſelves this night. Take charge of us and our's, O thou Keeper of Iſrael, who never ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth, watch over us for good. When we ſleep, let our hearts wake; and our ſouls lie open to the influence of thy bleſſed ſpirit; keep us without ſin by the power of thy grace: gracious Lord, ſhower down thy bleſſings upon us, the unworthy family now before thee: let the voice of joy and health be heard in this dwelling: let thy peace be within theſe walls, and the plenteouſneſs of thy ſalvation within thoſe gates;

make

make this an houſe of prayer, and every ſoul within it a living temple of thee, the living God, through Jeſus Chriſt, our only mediator and advocate. *Amen.*

SATURDAY MORNING.

(Collect, before reading the Scripture.)

BLESSED Lord, who haſt cauſed all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may in ſuch wiſe hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold faſt the bleſſed hope of everlaſting life, which thou haſt given us in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

(Reading and ſinging ended, add)

Our Father, &c.

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks: yea unto thee will we give thanks, becauſe thy name alſo is ſo nigh, and that do thy wonderous works declare. We beſeech thee, gracious God, to hear us mercifully at this time, pardon our manifold ſinfulneſs, and ſupply our manifold wants. Write the

the law of thankfulneſs upon our hearts for the experience we have already had of thy goodneſs, and kindly go on to be nigh unto us, in all that we call upon thee for. Waſh away the ſins of the laſt night, and thoſe of this day hitherto; who can tell how oft we offend, none but thou that knoweſt all things. O cleanſe thou us from our ſecret faults, and from our original depravity, the ſource of all; may we be juſtified fully, freely, and finally, by thy grace, through the redemption, that is in Jeſus, and ſanctified by the renewing efficacy of thy bleſſed ſpirit. Bleſs us in this our private waiting upon thee, we are gathered together, in thy name, at the footſtool of thy grace; Lord Jeſus, be in the midſt of us, and give unto us a comfortable view of our intereſt in thy precious merits. Thy righteouſneſs, bloodſhedding, and interceſſion, are the altar which ſanctifies every ſacrifice of prayer and praiſe which we offer up. Thou makeſt both the perſons and the performances of thy people acceptable to the Father, mingle our addreſſes with the incenſe of thy interceſſion, and then they will go up as a memorial before God. O thou

thou riſen and aſcended Saviour, may our hearts and affections tend upwards, to thy throne in heaven, that by faith in thy adorable perſon and infinite merits, and by the exerciſe of continual obedience and deadneſs to the world, we may ſafely hope to be with thee, where thou art, there to behold thy glory. O thou uncreated majeſty, we acknowledge that all the bleſſings of a ſpiritual and temporal caſt, that we have received, from our exiſtence to this day, are of thy free and unmerited goodneſs; was the diſtributions of thy favours to be regulated by our deſervings, they would ſoon be withdrawn. Therefore, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praiſe and the glory aſcribed. Hear us, O God of our ſalvation, and do more for us than we are able to aſk or think, for the ſake of thy Son, our Redeemer; to whom, with thee, and the Holy Ghoſt, three co-equal perſons, in the unity of one Godhead, be aſcribed all glory and adoration, by the Church above and the Church below, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SATURDAY

SATURDAY EVENING.

(The Collect before reading the Scriptures.)

ALMIGHTY and everlaſting God, who art always more ready to hear, than we to pray, and are wont to give more than either we deſire or deſerve; pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy: forgiving us thoſe things, whereof our conſciences are afraid; and giving us thoſe good things which we are not worthy to aſk, much leſs to receive, but through the merits and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord, in whom we deſire to be found, and in his name, do we now approach the throne of thy grace, and make mention of his righteouſneſs, only as the ground of our juſtification in the ſight of our heavenly Father: to whom with the bleſſed Spirit, be aſcribed all honour and dominion, world without end. *Amen.*

(After reading and ſinging, add)

Our Father, &c.

Wherewith ſhall we come before thee, O Lord: or bow ourſelves in thy preſence, O thou moſt high God.

Cauſe us to come unto thee in faith: mentioning no other name, pleading no other righteouſneſs, and truſting in no other atonement, than the name, righteouſneſs and atonement of thy bleſſed Son, and our adorable mediator Jeſus Chriſt. In him we deſire to be found; through him we hope for favour with thee, and acceptance in thy ſight. Bleſſed be thy goodneſs for the mercies of the day, for the bleſſings of thy providence, the comforts of thy ſpirit, and the privileges we enjoy.——We thank thee, that we have been protected from danger, and above all, if we have been, in any meaſure, withheld by grace from ſinning againſt thee. Sinners we are, and ſinned againſt thee we have, even at the beſt of times, and in the beſt of frames; but, Lord, make us thankful for the deſire which thou haſt given us, of living unto thee; and oh! make our deſires effectual through the mighty working of thy Spirit, who is able to ſubdue even our rebellious hearts to himſelf: Lord, waſh out the tranſgreſſions of this day, and of this week now nearly cloſing. Look upon the covenant of thy grace; and through the blood of the covenant, forgive us

all

all our ſins, and cancel the hand-writing that is againſt us, and nail it to the croſs. Purge us with hyſop, and we ſhall be clean; waſh us and we ſhall be whiter than ſnow. Shouldeſt thou lay judgment to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet, ſhouldeſt thou deal with us after our ſins, or reward us according to our deſerts, or if thou waſt to enter into judgment with us, upon the footing of our beſt performances, alas! we could not ſtand in thy preſence, nor be juſtified in thy ſight. Our prayers, our praiſes, our almſ-deeds, and all we are and do, if weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary, and brought to the teſt of thy perfect law, would be found not only deplorably deficient, but altogether lighter than vanity itſelf—yet, though we are vile, thou art gracious. We bleſs thee for that rich proviſion of grace and glory, which thou haſt made for thy penitent people, in the righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, and interceſſion of him who is their advocate with the Father, and the propitiation for their ſins. Thou haſt delivered thy redeemed from going down into the pit, by contriving, finding, and accepting a ranſom for

them. O certify us, by thy bleſſed ſpirit, and by the tokens of grace, that we are of the happy number: that we are loved by thee with an everlaſting love, intereſted in the ſure mercies of David. Continue thy goodneſs towards us to-night; may we, as the beloved of the Lord, dwell in ſafety by him. Make us reſt under thy defence, O thou Moſt High, and abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty. Thy mercies to us have been equally great, numerous, and unmerited; may we ever experience thee to be a God of love. Perfect, O Lord, that which concerneth us, and forſake not the work of thine own hands. Bleſs us with thy preſence, thy grace, and thy protection. Suffer not the enemy to have any advantage over us; neither let the ſon of wickedneſs approach to hurt us.

Be with all thine every where. Viſit them, in particular, with thy ſalvation, whom we deſire to bear upon our hearts before thee. May thoſe, who are near and dear to us, be near and dear to God: and, whatever ſeparation thy good providence may make upon earth, O grant that we and they may meet

meet with joy at thy right hand in the hour of death and in the day of judgment.——Bleſs the ſinful nations, of which we are a ſinful part. Maintain the cauſe of thy truth, and enlarge the kingdom of thy Son, amongſt us. Remember for good thy faithful people of every denomination; more eſpecially regard with thy choiceſt favour, and defend with thy mighty power, the Church to which we belong; the goſpel vine which thy own right hand hath planted; and which, by thy gracious providence, hath taken root and filled the land. May ſhe extend her boughs from ſea to ſea, until they have filled the whole earth! may we abide by her doctrines, and walk worthy of the holy vocation with which we are called.—Bleſs thy ſervant the king: the queen: and every branch of his illuſtrious houſe. May the crown ſit eaſy, and ſit very long, upon his royal head. Direct his counſels to the advancement of thy glory, the good of thy Church, and the ſafety, honour and welfare of himſelf and his dominions. —May all orders and degrees of men, from the higheſt to the loweſt, be fearers of God, lovers of truth, and

workers of righteouſneſs, ſtrengthen and relieve thoſe who labour under any affliction in mind, body, or eſtate; and make all work together for their good.——Preſerved by thy gracious mercy we are coming near to the end of another week, many of our fellow creatures ſince the commencement thereof, have left this ſcene, and have entered upon an eternal ſtate. O God moſt holy, O God moſt mighty, grant, that, before our eyes cloſe in death, we may be enabled to embrace the Lord's Chriſt in the arms of our faith, and under the ſhinings of thy countenance, and in the unclouded proſpect of thy celeſtial abode, may ſay, Now, Lord, letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation; carry us holy, peaceably, and ſafely, through the enſuing Sabbath. Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and may our comforts be neither few nor ſmall. In all the duties that are before us, may we look to the ſpirit of grace, for willingneſs and power to ſerve thee faithfully, and may our entire dependence be upon the merits of Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, to render our defective, polluted ſervices,

ſuch

ſuch as thou wilt mercifully accept in him. Be thou on to-morrow preſent in the worſhipping aſſemblies of thy ſaints; meet them that deſire to meet with thee, and viſit them with thy ſalvation, who mean to viſit and wait on thee in the ordinances of thy appointment; may ſuch as ſeek thee be joyful and glad in thee; and may they find by happy experience, that one day in thy courts is better than a thouſand elſewhere, and that thy houſe is indeed the houſe of God, and the gate of heaven. Be with all thy faithful ſtewards of thy myſteries in every place, who ſhall adminiſter in thy name. Enable them rightly to divide the word of truth, giving both to ſaints and ſinners their portion. Pardon the unworthineſs of miniſters and people, and vouchſafe to own thy glorious goſpel, by making it effectual to the ſalvation of them that hear; every ſpiritual and temporal mercy, we requeſt, for the alone ſake of Jeſus Chriſt the righteous. *Amen.*

MEDITATIONS,

MEDITATIONS, &c.

TO unconverted perſons, a great part of the Bible reſembles a letter written in cypher, the bleſſed Spirit's office is to act as God's decypherer, by letting his people into the ſecret of celeſtial experience, as the key and clue to thoſe ſecret myſteries of grace, which were, before, as a garden ſhut up, or as a fountain ſealed, or as a book written in an unknown character.

Our Lord has vouchſafed to make the ſcriptures the ſource from whence he drew, and the teſt to which he referred, every article of faith which he propoſed to mankind. In perfect conformity with that unerring ſtandard, he aſſerted and teached that grand fundamental axiom of all true religion; the unity of the Godhead, we find him quoting and ſetting his ſeal to thoſe words of Moſes, "Hear "O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one "Lord." And again, "Thou ſhalt "worſhip the Lord thy God, and him "only ſhalt thou ſerve." Though Chriſt was careful to maintain, inviolably, the unity of the divine eſſence; he was no leſs careful, to aſſert a plurality of perſons in that eſſence; as to himſelf, in particular, he expreſsly averred, All things that the Father

Father hath are mine*: the ſame moral attributes; the ſame natural perfections; the ſame infinity of exiſtence, glory, and power. He aſſociates himſelf with the Father, as governor of all things in a way of providence: My Father worketh hitherto, and I work†. Immediately after relating which words, the evangeliſt adds, Therefore the Jews, in whoſe hearing this declaration was made, ſought the more to kill him, becauſe he had ſaid that God was his father, making himſelf equal with God. Conſequently, either Chriſt, conſidered in his ſuperior character, muſt be, truly and properly, a perſon in the divine nature; or we muſt file an accuſation againſt him, as guilty of the blackeſt impiety in claiming an equality with the Moſt High. We muſt either blaſphemouſly degrade the Saviour of men infinitely below the level even of that proud and preſumptuous cardinal, who was deſervedly impeached for putting himſelf into copartnerſhip with his earthly ſovereign, by writing, in his public letters, "The king and I;"—we muſt either do this, or acknowledge the Meſſiah to be, what moſt certainly he is, in concert with the Father and the ſacred ſpirit, God over all, bleſſed for ever. When the Jews ſaid to him, For a good work we ſtone thee not, but

* John xvi. 15. † John v. 17.

for

for blaſphemy, and becauſe thou, being a man, makeſt thyſelf God *; would he not have corrected them in a point of ſuch unſpeakable moment, if they had really miſtaken his meaning? Would he not, like Paul and Barnabas at Lyſtra, have diſavowed, with horror and indignation, all pretenſions to divinity, if he had not, indeed and in truth, been divine? Would he, like impious Herod, have acquieſced in the ſuppoſed arrogation of Deity, if he had not been God and man in one perſon? But ſo far was he from telling his accuſers, that they miſapprehended his doctrine, and that he laid no ſort of claim to the honours of the Godhead; he, on the contrary, confirmed the inference they had drawn, by appealing to the miracles he performed: Though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. Would he have left a poſitive injunction, that all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father †; if the Son was not equally divine? How would it ſound, if a lawgiver was to enact, "That all men ſhould honour the angel Gabriel with the ſame honour which they render to God?" we ſhould tremble with horror; we ſhould be overwhelmed with conſternation, at the prodigiouſneſs

* John x. 33. † John v. 23.

of

of ſuch impiety. And why? Becauſe the honour due to God is peculiar to God, and cannot, without ſacrilege, be transferred to any inferior being. I conclude, therefore, that ſeeing the Redeemer of ſinners lays claim to divine honours, he is and muſt be a divine perſon. If not, the conſequences would be dreadful indeed. From the Arian and Socinian hypotheſis, that he is, at moſt, but the firſt and higheſt of created beings, it would follow (I ſpeak it with horror; but follow it inevitably would), that the Jews did right, in branding him for a blaſphemer, and in proſecuting him as an impoſtor. There is no poſſible medium. Either he was and is what he profeſſed to be, "equal with the Father, as touching his Godhead;" or, he muſt be deſervedly ranked with the moſt impious and execrable of all human characters. If Chriſt were not very and eternal God, Chriſtianity would be the moſt refined ſyſtem of idolatry, and conſequently, the moſt exquiſitely dangerous religion, under heaven.

Nothing ſhort of Trinity in unity could juſtify the commiſſion, which our bleſſed Lord gave to his apoſtles and their ſucceſſors, to baptize in the name, or into the knowledge and worſhip, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*.

* Matth. xxviii. 19.

If

If the Son of God were not God the Son, if the Spirit of God were not God the Spirit, the adminiſtration of baptiſm in their name would be an act of the higheſt profaneneſs and idolatry. The doctrine, therefore, of a trinity of perſons in the unity of one divine nature, is a doctrine of expreſs revelation; a doctrine of the utmoſt conſequence; and which lies at the very root and foundation of the Chriſtian ſyſtem.

Give up this, and you give up all. The whole of Chriſtianity is but an empty name, without it.

THE Sacred Oracles acquaint us, that the firſt man was created ſpiritually and morally upright: nay, that he was made after the image of God; and was in ſome reſpects, and with due allowance for the neceſſary imperfection inſeparable from a creature, the living tranſcript of him that formed him.

This phraſe, the image of God, is to be underſtood chiefly in a ſpiritual, and entirely in a figurative ſenſe. It does not refer to the beauty, and to the erect ſtature, of the body; but to the holy and ſublime qualification of the ſoul. The grand outlines, therefore, of that divine reſemblance, in which Adam was conſtructed,

ſtructed, were holineſs, knowledge, dominion, happineſs and immortality.

But man, being thus made in honour, abode not as he was made, for reaſons, beſt known to that unerring Providence which ordains and directs every event, it was the divine pleaſure to permit an apoſtate ſpirit, whoſe creation and fall were prior to the formation of man, to preſent the poiſonous cup of temptation: whereof our firſt parents taſted, and, in taſting, fell.

From hence proceeds that univerſal depravation of the human ſpecies. For as ſoon as we are born, we go aſtray, nay, I will venture, on ſcripture authority, to carry the point higher ſtill. All mankind are guilty and depraved before they are born; behold, I was ſhapen in wickedneſs, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* A thunder-bolt to human pride, and a dagger in the very heart of natural excellence. Thus ſpeaks the Bible, and thus experience ſpeaks.

The heart of man, ſays God, by the prophet, is deceitful, above all things, and deſperately wicked: who can know it. In me, ſaid the apoſtle, that is, in my fleſh, abſtracted from ſupernatural grace, dwelleth no good thing; and, ſays a greater than both, from within, out of

* Pſalm li.

the

the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs, all theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.* Is it poſſible, that any, who calls himſelf a chriſtian, can, after conſidering the above declaration of Chriſt, dare to compare the human mind, to a ſheet of white paper? or, to a pliant ozier, which you may bend, with eaſe, this way, or that? Or, to a balance in equilibrio, which you may incline to either ſide, according as you throw more or leſs weight into the ſcale? Or, to a wax tablet, on which you may ſtamp what impreſſions you pleaſe? Alas! the impreſſion is already made; the thoughts and purpoſes of man's heart, previous to regeneration are, ſpiritually conſidered, only evil, and that continually.† When converting grace lays hold of us, there is not only an heart of fleſh to be given, but an heart of ſtone, to be taken away.‡ God muſt not only write his own law on the minds of his people; but muſt obliterate the law of ſin and death, which has a prior footing in every man that naturally is engendered of the off-ſpring of Adam. To a reſtoration unto that dignity from which you are fallen. Let this,

*Mark vii. † Gen. vi. 5. ‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

then, be your prayer, "Try me, O God, and ſearch the ground of my heart, prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any wickedneſs in me, any root of bitterneſs yet undiſcovered; and lead me in the way everlaſting. Shew me the true ſtate of my ſoul, bring me out from every falſe refuge, ſtrip off every deceitful covering, every covering that is not of thy ſpirit. Forbid, that the anchor of my hope ſhould be caſt, or the houſe of my dependence built, on any but Chriſt, the rock of ages; forbid that I ſhould reſt ſhort of that repentance which is thy gift, and is connected with life eternal; and forbid, O forbid, that I ſhould ſit down without aſpiring to that conformity unto thee in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; abſtracted from which, repentance is falſe, and faith is dead."

Queſt. WHAT is the moral law of God?

Anſw. The tranſcript of his own moſt holy nature, and the ſtandard of human purity and obedience.

Queſt. Will this law make any allowance for human infirmity, or admit any abatement of the perfect conformity which it demands?

Anſw. It makes no allowance for the former,

former, nor will it dispense with a single grain of the latter.

Quest. How does that appear?

Answ. It appears, from the undeniable current of scripture; where the language of the law is, be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect. *—Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law, to do them. † The indispensable requisition is, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. § Hence in the eye of the law, and the estimation of the law-giver, the risings of wrath are tantamount to murder, the calling any man a fool, exposes us to the penalty of hell fire; and impure thoughts bring us under the condemnation of actual adultery. ‡

Quest. What is the grand inference from these alarming premises?

Answ. That inference, which the apostle terms an evident one, and evident it is; viz. that no man is justified by the law, in the sight of God. || For a single breach of the law renders us guilty of the whole. ¶ And one idle word lays us open

* Matth. v. 48.
† Gal. iii. 10.
§ Luke x. 27.
‡ Matth. v. 22. 28.
|| Gal. iii. 2.
¶ James ii. 10.

to the vengeance of God, according to the tenor of the covenant of works *.

Queſt. Is there a ſingle minute, from the firſt of our exiſtence, to the very article of death, wherein we come up to the whole of that inward and outward holineſs which God's all perfect law requires?

Anſw. Moſt certainly not.

Queſt. When ſhall we be able to pay off this immenſe debt?

Anſw. Never. Eternity itſelf, ſo far from clearing us of the dreadful arrear, would only add to the ſcore, by plunging us deeper and deeper, even to infinity. Hence the damned will never be able to ſatisfy the juſtice of the Almighty creditor.

Queſt. Will not divine goodneſs compound for the debt, by accepting leſs than we owe?

Anſw. Impoſſible. Juſtice, holineſs, and truth, will and muſt have their own, even to the very uttermoſt farthing. God himſelf, with profoundeſt veneration be it ſpoken, muſt renounce himſelf, before he can forego his eſſential attributes, and repeal his inviolable law, by offering violence to thoſe, and by making void the claims and the threatnings of this.

Queſt. Who, then, can do us any good, in this reſpect?

Anſw. Not all the angels in heaven,

* Matth. xii. 36.

nor

nor all the men that ever did or ever ſhall exiſt. Others cannot help us, nor can we help our own ſelves.

Queſt. If ſo, are we not loſt, without remedy, and without end?

Anſw. In ourſelves, we are. But (ſing, O heavens!) God's own arm brought ſalvation.

Queſt. How ſo? What is there, wherewith to counterbalance ſuch an exceeding and aſtoniſhing weight of guilt?

Anſw. "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law; being made a curſe for us." Gal. iii. 13.—This, this, will not only counter-balance, but infinitely over-balance, all the ſins of the whole believing world.

Queſt. If the perſonal ſhort comings and miſdoings, of each ſinner in particular, amount to ſo vaſt a multitude, who can calculate the extent of the whole national debt, the entire aggregated ſum, which (abſtracted from her union with Chriſt) lies on the church at large, that elect nation, whom he has redeemed from among men?

Anſw. The arithmetic of angels would be unable to aſcertain the full amount.

O thou covenanting, thou incarnate, thou obeying, thou bleeding, thou dying, thou riſen, thou aſcended, thou interceding Son of God! not all the ſeraphs thou haſt created, not all the innumerable ſaints thy

love

love hath ranſomed, will be able to comprehend, much leſs to diſplay, along the endleſs line of eternity itſelf, the length, the breadth, the depth, the height, of a ſinner's obligations to thee.

Queſt. If, on one hand, we are each conſtrained to cry out, with the believers of old, Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, O Lord, for in thy ſight ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified by works of human performance.—Who can tell how oft he offendeth?—How ſhall man be juſt with God? If thou contend with him for his tranſgreſſions, he cannot anſwer thee for one of a thouſand;—My ſins are more in number than the hairs of my head;—Forgive us our debts, and caſt all our ſins into the depths of the ſea; what has faith to ſay?

Anſw. Faith, on the other hand, can reply, in the very words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, the blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin: and there is now no condemnation [ουδεν κατακριμα, not one condemnation] to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus. So that we may ſing, with Dr. Watts,

"Believing ſinners free are ſet,
For Chriſt hath paid their dreadful debt."

We may add, in the words of another ſweet ſinger in Iſrael,

"Who now ſhall urge a ſecond claim?
The law no longer can condemn;
Faith a releaſe can ſhow:

Juſtice

Juſtice itſelf a friend appears;
The priſon-houſe a whiſper hears,
Looſe him, and let him go!"

Queſt. What return can believers render, to the glorious and gracious Trinity, for mercy and plenteous redemption like this?

Anſw. We can only admire and bleſs the Father, for electing us in Chriſt, and for laying on him the iniquity of us all:—the Son, for taking our nature and our debts upon himſelf, and for that complete righteouſneſs and ſacrifice, whereby he redeemed his myſtic Iſrael from all their ſins;—and the co-equal ſpirit, for cauſing us (in converſion) to feel our need of Chriſt, for inſpiring us with faith to embrace him, for viſiting us with his ſweet conſolations by ſhedding abroad his love in our hearts, for ſealing us to the day of Chriſt, and for making us to walk in the path of his commandments.

THE antient heathens in vain attempted to diſcover the door, by which natural evil (as ſickneſs, afflictions, ſorrow, pain, death) entered into the world: namely, the ſin of Adam. Though the reaſons why God permitted Adam to ſin, are as deeply in the dark as ever; what we do know of God, enti les him, ſurely, to this

ſmall

ſmall tribute at our hands, viz. that we repoſe our faith, with an abſolute, an implicit, and an unlimitted acquieſcence, on his unerring wiſdom and will: ſafely confident, that what ſuch a being ordains and permits, is and muſt be right: however incapable we may find ourſelves, at preſent, to diſcern and comprehend the full propriety of his moral government.

We learn from hence the infinite freeneſs, and the unſpeakable preciouſneſs, of his electing love. Why were any choſen, when all might juſtly have been paſſed by? Becauſe he was reſolved, for his own name's ſake, to make known the riches of his glory, i. e. of his glorious grace, on the veſſels of mercy, whom he therefore prepared unto glory.

Let this, O believer, humble you under the mighty hand of God: and convince you, with deeper impreſſion than if ten thouſand angels were to preach it from heaven, that election is not of works, but of him that calleth. Not your merit, but his unmerited mercy, mercy irreſpective of either your good works or your bad ones, induced him to write your name in the Lamb's book of life.

So totally are we fallen by nature, that we cannot contribute any thing towards our recovery. Hence it was God's own arm which brought ſalvation. It is he that

that makes us his people, and the ſheep of his paſture; not we ourſelves.

We are, in ſhort, what the Scripture affirms us to be, naturally dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: and no dead man can make himſelf to differ from another. Converſion is a new birth, a reſurrection, a new creation. What infant ever begat himſelf? What inanimate carcaſe ever quickened and raiſed itſelf? What creature ever created itſelf?

Boaſt not, then, of your free-will; for it is, like what the prophet ſaith of Nineveh, empty, and void, and waſte. They that feel not this, reſemble delirious perſons in a high fever: who imagine that nothing ails them, while in fact they are at the very gates of death. Nay, mankind in their native ſtate are more than at the gates of death. The traveller, in the parable, who went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, is ſaid to have been left half-dead; but the degenerated ſons of Adam are, ſpiritually ſpeaking, ſtark-dead to God. An unrenewed man has not one ſpiritual ſenſe left: no hearing of the promiſes; no ſight of his own miſery, nor of God's holineſs, nor of the perfect purity of the law, nor of Chriſt as an abſolute Saviour, nor of the bleſſed ſpirit as the revealer of Chriſt in the heart; no taſte of the Father's everlaſting love, nor of communion with him through the

the miniſtration of the Holy Ghoſt; no feeling of grace, in a way of conviction, comfort, and ſanctification; no hungerings and thirſtings after ſpiritual enjoyments and ſweet aſſurances; no heavenly tendencies, no outgoings of ſoul, after the blood, righteouſneſs, and interceſſion, of Jeſus Chriſt. If we experience theſe, they are indications of ſpiritual life: and we may take thoſe reviving words to ourſelves, Fleſh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

Beg the Lord to ſhew you the depth of your fall. Free grace, finiſhed ſalvation, imputed righteouſneſs, atoning blood, unchangeable mercy, and the whole chain of evangelical bleſſings, will then be infinitely precious to your heart.

Prize the covenant of redemption, which is a better covenant, and founded upon better promiſes, than that which Adam broke. The covenant of works ſaid, "Do, and live; ſin, and die." The covenant of grace ſays, "I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The covenant of works inſiſted on a perfection of perſonal obedience: the covenant of grace provided and accepts the perfect atonement and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as ours.

This ſhews both the folly and wickedneſs

neſs of depending on our own works for ſalvation. Which ſoul-deſtroying deluſion is founded on ignorance that the covenant of works was broken and annulled the very moment Adam fell. I mean, annulled, as to any poſſibility of ſalvation by it: elſe it is ſtill in full force, as the miniſtration of condemnation and death to every ſoul that finally clings to it for pardon and eternal life. Man unfallen, might have been ſaved by works. But there is no deliverance for fallen man, except by the free grace of the Father, and the imputed righteouſneſs of a ſacrificed Redeemer.—Therefore,

Let the ſenſe of our original depravation, of our continued vileneſs, and the impoſſibility of our being ſaved in a legal way, induce us to prize the blood, obedience, and interceſſion of Jeſus, the ſecond Adam, the Lord from heaven. This is the inference, drawn by the apoſtle himſelf, from the doctrine I have been aſſerting. Therefore, ſays he, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men [even upon all the elect themſelves], unto condemnation; ſo, by the righteouſneſs of one, the free-gift came upon all men [upon all the elect, believing world] unto juſtification of life: for as, by one man's diſobedience, many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one, ſhall many be made righteous. Rom. v. 18, 19.—And

elſewhere, St. Paul reaſons in the ſame manner: All [i. e. all God's elect, no leſs than others] have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God. What is the conſequence? It is immediately added, being juſtified freely, by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt. Rom. iii. 23, 24.

Hence likewiſe appear the neceſſity and value of effectual calling. Why does our Lord ſay, that, except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God? Becauſe we are totally ſinful and corrupt by nature; as unfit for, and as incapable of enjoying, the glories of the celeſtial world; as a beetle is, of being elevated to the dignity and office of a firſt miniſter of ſtate.

Since ſuch is the natural condition of man, with regard to ſpiritual things; take heed that you do not look upon election, juſtification, redemption, and regeneration, as mere technical terms, belonging to divinity as a ſyſtem, or ſcience. They are infinitely more. Theſe and ſuch-like terms are expreſſive of the greateſt and moſt important realities: without the experience of which, we are condemned, ruined, loſt.

Original ſin accounts for the remaining imperfections, too viſible in them that are born of God. The brighteſt ſaints below ever had, and ever will have, their dark ſides.

ſides. Abraham, Noah, Job, David, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Paul, Peter, John, were ſanctified but in part. On earth, God's converted people are each a compound of light and ſhades. In glory we ſhall be all light, without any mixture of ſhade whatever.

Since the inhabiters of earth are degenerated from their original ſtate, let not believers be afraid to die.

" Death has no pang, but what frail life imparts;
" Nor life true joy, but what kind death improves."

By quitting its mortal cage, the heaven-born ſoul is delivered from all its ſins, and cares, and pains; and kindles into perfection of holineſs, and majeſty, and joy. At the appointed time, the body too will partake of complete redemption; and be delivered, totally and eternally delivered, into the glorious liberty and dignity of the children of God.——Accompliſh, Lord, the number of thine elect, and haſten thy kingdom!

TRULY wonderful is the power and ſwiftneſs, with which the convincing arrows of the Holy Ghoſt are often found to pierce and illuminate the ſoul of an elect ſinner. How was the energy of his arm re-

vealed; how mightily, and how rapidly, did the meltings of his grace catch from heart to heart; when no fewer than three thouſand rebels were ſavingly ſubdued, and born again, under a ſingle ſermon! Acts ii. 41.——What inſtantaneous and irreſiſtible lightening iſſued from the eye of Jeſus, when he looked his revolted apoſtle into repentance unto life!—And, to enumerate no more inſtances, how great was the glory of that light, which (in a moment; or in leſs time, if leſs can be) ſtruck the bloody phariſee of Tarſus to the ground; transformed the furious lion into a paſſive lamb; and compelled a blaſpheming perſecutor to groan, from the inmoſt of his heart, Lord, what wouldſt thou have me to do? Nor is leſs power, from on high, exerted in the ſoul of any man who is effectually turned to God. The ſame omnipotence, which conquered Paul; yea, the ſame omnipotence which raiſed Jeſus himſelf from the dead; has actually been put forth in thee, O reader, if thou haſt experienced the renewing operation of the Holy Spirit. 1 Tim. i. 16. Eph. i. 19, 20.

REPENTANCE is one of thoſe graces, without which there can be no ſalvation. It is an eſſential pre-requiſite to ſpiritual peace,

peace, on earth; and abſolutely neceſſary, as a preparative for the eternal happineſs of heaven. The reaſon is evident: viz. becauſe every man is a fallen being. We muſt, therefore, by the effectual working of God's good ſpirit, be made ſenſible of our fall; or we ſhall never feel our need of redemption and reſtoration from it, through the alone covenant-grace of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

Not that either repentance, or faith, or any of their practical fruits, are in the leaſt reſpect cauſal, or conditional, or meritorious, of pardon, happineſs, and eternal life. Every grace, and every good work, are the free gifts of God. From him only, "All holy deſires, all good counſels, and all juſt works, do proceed." He it is, who "grants us true repentance, and his holy ſpirit." Conſequently, we cannot poſſibly, in the very nature of things, merit (i. e. earn) or entitle ourſelves to his favour, by any grace we exerciſe, or by any duty we perform. His gifts lay us under infinite obligations to him, inſtead of empowering us to merit any thing from him. They do not render him a debtor to us, but render us unſpeakable and everlaſting debtors to him.

Therefore, when we ſay, that no man can be ultimately ſaved, without ſuch and ſuch qualifications; we do not mean, that thoſe qualifications have any influence in

obtaining our ſalvation (for inherent grace and eternal glory are already obtained, and infallibly ſecured to all God's elect, by the obedience and blood of Chriſt): but that thoſe qualifications (as faith, repentance, and holineſs of heart and life) are eſſential branches and indiſpenſible evidences of this abſolutely free ſalvation.

The argument may be illuſtrated thus. No perſon can attain to full maturity of manhood, until he has paſſed through the intermediate ſtages of infancy, childhood, and youth. And yet it would be very abſurd, were we to ſay, that a ſtate of manhood is merited by the previous ſtates of youth, childhood, and infancy!—So, in order to the conſummation of our recovery unto God, it is antecedently neceſſary, that we believe, repent, and reſemble Chriſt in holineſs. Yet faith, penitence, and ſanctification, do not merit the kingdom of heaven, though we cannot reach that kingdom without them. According to the eſtabliſhed order of grace, we muſt be endued with thoſe ſpiritual gifts, before we can receive the gift of glorification to crown the whole. Juſt as, according to the eſtabliſhed courſe of nature, we muſt be children, before we can be full-grown men.

In this only ſenſe, then, it is, that the ſeveral graces of the bleſſed ſpirit are ſo many pre-requiſites to final ſalvation.

All

All the links of the goſpel chain are inſeparable: but each ranks in its own order, and the concatenation is ſtrictly regular. Inherent grace is the dawning of eternal glory: and eternal glory is the perfection of inherent grace. They are parts of one magnificent and undivided whole. Grace is the earneſt of glory; glory is the full poſſeſſion of grace. Grace is the firſt fruits: glory, the unbounded harveſt. And he that has the former, ſhall as certainly have the latter.

While men continue ſtrangers to repentance, or mental change, they heartily love, and eagerly purſue, the imaginary pleaſures of ſin. The underſtanding of a natural man is ſo darkened, as to miſtake that for happineſs, which is in fact eſſential miſery. The darkneſs of his underſtanding neceſſarily perverts his will, ſo that he inevitably chuſes evil in preference to good. A perverted will poiſons the affections. And corrupt affections, if uncurbed by providential reſtraints, never fail to teem with the baneful fruits of practical immorality and licentiouſneſs.

But no ſooner is this very ſinner changed by efficacious grace, or endued with repentance unto life *; than his underſtanding, clouded before with the darkneſs of ſpiritual ignorance and unbelief, becomes

* Acts xi. 18.

light

light in the Lord *. He ſees, that the favour and the reſemblance of God conſtitute the ſupreme happineſs of an immortal ſoul; that God's favour can flow to ſinners, through the channel of Chriſt's redemption only; and that God's reſemblance can be re-communicated to the fallen, by no other efficiency, than the interior operation of the Holy Ghoſt, cauſing old things to be done away, and making all things become new †.

This ſupernatural illumination of the underſtanding (which ſeems to be the initial point of regeneration, or the firſt effect of converting grace on the mind) conciliates the will to holineſs. The ſoul chuſes God for its p rtion, loves him as its happineſs, and ardently aſpires to that ſanctification which qualifies for heaven.

The affections are now centripetals; or, through the power of divine attraction, tend to God in Chriſt, and repoſe in him as the centre and ſource of love, the Alpha and Omega of rational and refined deſire. Whom have I in heaven, but thee? and there is none, upon earth, that I deſire in compariſon of thee ‡.

A ſinner, thus enlightened and thus renewed, cannot but feel ſorrow and remorſe for all his paſt and preſent deviations from the law of God. The depravity of his na-

* Eph. v. 8. † 2 Cor. v. 17. ‡ Pſ. lxxiii. 25.

ture,

ture, and the tranſgreſſions of his life, fill him with ſerious, poignant, perpetual humiliation. Being led by grace to the fountain of living waters, he deeply laments his having ſo long endeavoured to hew out unto himſelf broken ciſterns which can hold no water*: and wonders, how he could be ſo blinded and ſo hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin †, as to ſeek for ſatisfaction in the ways of death; and madly dream, that his happineſs would improve, in proportion as he ſtrayed from God.

Above all, when he finds, that the expiation of his guilt, and his redemption from the damnation of hell, could be effected at no leſs expence, than by the miraculous incarnation and moſt bitter death of God's co-equal Son;—oh, how powerfully does this induce the ſoul to ‡ ſorrow after a godly ſort! what carefulneſs and concern does it work in the heart! what ſelf-indignation! what fear of God! what vehement deſire of forgiveneſs! what zeal for holineſs! what revenge and abhorrence of ſin! Theſe, theſe, are the properties of genuine repentance. Theſe, theſe, are the evidences of our engrafture into Chriſt. Joy is in heaven over ſuch repentance as this. God the Father acquieſces, with complacency, in the ſoul that is thus

* Jer. ii. 13. † Heb. iii. 13. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 11.

brought

brought to his mercy-ſeat. The glorified Redeemer ſees the reward of his mediatorial obedience unto death, and is ſatisfied. The holy ſpirit ſmiles on his own work, haſtens to comfort the ſinner he has ſubdued, and goes on to accompliſh the ſanctification he has began.

Every ſigh, which the penitent breathes, is treaſured up: and every tear he ſheds, is noted down. His prayers are conſecrated, and wafted to the throne, by the incenſe of Immanuel's interceſſion. And, at the deſtined time, he ſhall aſcend, on the wings of angels, to his ſeat in paradiſe: where kindred ſpirits, who rejoiced at his converſion here, will congratulate his happy arrival there.

IN the diſtribution of the bleſſings promiſed to the elect, a certain order and œconomy are obſerved. Grace is firſt given, then glory. Thus we believe and ſay, with the Apoſtle, that without holineſs, no man ſhall ſee the Lord: or, that a man muſt be ſanctified before he can be finally glorified. God does not eventually ſave an elect perſon, until he has previouſly regenerated that perſon. Hence final ſalvation is frequently, in ſcripture, held forth to the view of his people, not only under the character of elect, but likewiſe under every other

other character they ſuſtain; ſuch as penitents, believers, ſaints, and workers of righteouſneſs; becauſe, in conſequence of their predeſtination to life, they are endued with the graces of repentance, faith, and ſanctification, in order to their meetneſs for and enjoyment of that eternal life which they were predeſtinated to. Regeneration muſt, and always does, come between the decree of election, and the ultimate accompliſhment of that decree; the means and the end being inſeparably linked together, both in God's own purpoſe, and his execution of it. Yet, means are one thing; conditions are another. And I challenge any one to point out one ſpiritual qualification, repreſented in the Bible, as previouſly requiſite to everlaſting life; which qualification is not, in the ſame Bible, declared to be the gift of God, and the work of his own grace in every one that ſhall be ſaved.

THE conſtituent members of the inviſible church, when brought to the knowledge of Chriſt by effectual calling, and added to the viſible fold, are a company called out of the world, and gathered in from among mankind: ſo that, during their abode on earth, they are a kingdom within a kingdom, as being not only ſubjects

jects of the kingdom of Providence, which they were before, in common with the reſt, but likewiſe exalted to be ſubjects of the kingdom of grace, which all mankind are not.

THE doctrine of the ſcripture is: that juſtification itſelf conſiſts in God's eſteeming and counting us righteous: that he thus eſteems and counts us righteous, neither for our faith, nor for our works, nor for both of them together; but ſolely and entirely on account of Chriſt's ſacrifice and obedience of Chriſt, as the alone matter of our juſtification as to be received, embraced, and reſted on by faith only, which faith is the gift of God: and, that this faith, thus divinely given and wrought in the ſoul by the Holy Ghoſt, is lively, active and purifying; having its fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life, ſanctification, and good works, are not conditions of, but conſequences reſulting from, intereſt in Chriſt and acceptance with God: not antecedent requiſites, in order to our being juſtified; but ſubſequent evidences, of our being ſo.

GOOD

GOOD works, being the effects of juſtification, cannot be the cauſe of it: any more than the volubility of a wheel is the cauſe of its rotundity. A wheel rolls, not in order to be made round, but in conſequence of being already ſo; in like manner, men do good works, not in order to be juſtified; but in conſequence of being juſtified already.

REAL chriſtians value ſanctification and good works, as the writings of their heavenly eſtate: which though they have no hand in procuring the eſtate, for that is already done, by the precious merits of the ſole mediator between God and man, yet prove that the eſtate is ours through the free grace of God, and the alone righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

THE pureſt ſet of religious tenets, when they float merely on the ſurface of the underſtanding, and are no otherwiſe received, than ſcholaſtically, as a ſcience, without reaching the heart; and ſure to leave the life and manners uncultivated and unrenewed. The regenerating influence of God's holy ſpirit on the ſoul, is the beſt door for the doctrines of grace to

enter at. When they flow to us through the channel of celeſtial experience, they cannot fail to throw our hearts, our tempers, and our morals, into the mould of holineſs. There are two ſorts of perſons, whoſe condition is eminently dangerous: thoſe, who know juſt enough of the goſpel ſyſtem, to hate it; and thoſe, who profeſs to love it, but hold it in unrighteouſneſs.

IT is frequently affirmed, that Chriſt expiated the ſins of the whole world. This is ſaying no more than the ſcripture has repeatedly ſaid. The point of enquiry is, What does that phraſe, the whole world, import? Surely, not every perſon, without exception, who did, does, or ſhall exiſt; for, in that ſenſe, it ſeems impoſſible that Chriſt could die for all. Some, for inſtance, in our Lord's time at leaſt, were guilty of that ſin which he himſelf has pronounced abſolutely unpardonable; and would he die for the pardon of thoſe, whoſe ſin, he avers, ſhall never be pardoned? This would be like a man's paying down an ineſtimable ranſom for ſuch as, he knows at the very time of his paying it, neither will nor can ever be ſet at liberty. Beſides, what ſhall we ſay of thoſe many final impenitents, whoſe departed ſouls had been in the place of torment,

ment, ages and ages before Chriſt was crucified at all? Full four thouſand years had elapſed, from the creation, before the Meſſiah was even manifeſted in the fleſh. And the ſcripture will not permit us to believe, that the whole of mankind, who died within that extenſive period, were glorified in heaven. Now, it would both impeach the wiſdom, and affront the dignity of Chriſt, as well as infinitely depreciate the value of his ſacrifice, to ſuppoſe, that he could poſſibly ſhed his blood on the croſs, for thoſe very ſouls, which were, at that very time, ſuffering for their own ſins in hell. The tenet, therefore, of a redemption abſolutely univerſal, will not ſtand the teſt either of ſcripture, reaſon, or the analogy of faith. Shall we, for example, affirm, that Chriſt died for the ſalvation of Judas? The fact ſeems to be impoſſible. It is plain that Judas ſlew himſelf, ſubſequently to the apprehenſion, but antecedently to the actual crucifixion of Chriſt. The ſoul of Judas, therefore, went to its own place of puniſhment, before Chriſt had offered himſelf in ſacrifice to God. And I cannot, for my own part, ſee, with what propriety Chriſt could die to ſave a perſon from going to hell, who was actually there already.

PREDESTINATION is the only ground, on which the divine foreknowledge and providence can ſtand. Abſtracted from the will and purpoſe of God, neither perſons, nor things, nor events, could have any certain futurition; conſequently, they could not be certainly foreknowledge. And providence muſt regulate every punctilio of its diſpenſations, by the ſame preconſtructed plan; or it would follow, that God is liable to unforeſeen emergencies, and acts either ignorantly, or contrary to his own will.

WITH what ſwiftneſs are the convincing arrows of the Holy Ghoſt found to pierce and illuminate the ſoul of an elect ſinner. How was the energy of his arm revealed; how mightily, and how rapidly, did the meltings of his grace catch from heart to heart; when no fewer than three thouſand rebels were ſavingly ſubdued, and born again, under a ſingle ſermon! Acts ii. 41. What inſtantaneous and irreſiſtible lightening iſſued from the eye of Jeſus, when he looked his revolted apoſtle into repentance unto life!—And, to enumerate no more inſtances, how great was the glory of that light, which (in a moment; or in leſs time, if leſs can be) ſtruck the bloody phariſee

phariſee of Tarſus to the ground; transformed the furious lion into a paſſive lamb; and compelled a blaſpheming perſecutor to groan, from the inmoſt of his heart, Lord, what wouldſt thou have me to do? Nor is leſs power, from on high, exerted in the ſoul of any man who is effectually turned to God. The ſame omnipotence, which conquered Paul; yea, the ſame omnipotence which raiſed Jeſus himſelf from the dead; has actually been put forth in thee, O reader, if thou haſt experienced the renewing operation of the Holy Spirit. 1 Tim. i. 16. Eph. i. 19, 20.

UNRENEWED nature ſpurns the idea of inheriting eternal life as the mere gift of Divine Sovereignty, and on the footing of abſolute grace. Therefore to admit and reliſh a ſyſtem ſo diametrically oppoſite to the natural pride of the human heart, is, with me, an inconteſtible proof, that a man's judgment, at leaſt, is brought into ſubjection to the obedience of Chriſt; and, to every ſuch perſon, thoſe words may be accommodated, "Fleſh and blood have not revealed this to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."

THE doctrines of free-will and of juſtification by works, are not doctrines really calculated to promote holineſs of life, whatever the aſſerters of thoſe tenets may pretend; generally ſpeaking, unſoundneſs and unholineſs ſeldom fail to walk arm in arm.

THOUGH we may be rooted and grounded in a belief of the eſſential perpetuity of grace, I am confident, that without conſtant and intenſe watching unto prayer, the exerciſe of grace is liable to a partial and temporary failure. Reader, may a happy coalition of fear and faith, may the moſt abſolute ſelf diſtruſt, united with an unſhaken confidence in the ſtability of divine grace, be your portion, and mine, till we enter the haven of everlaſting joy; where we ſhall no longer ſtand in need of faith, to fill our ſails, nor of fear, to ſteady us with ballaſt.

FROM that declaration of our Lord, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work; and from that aſſertion of the apoſtle, In him we live, and are moved, and exiſt; I infer, we can find no firſt cauſe, wherein to reſt, unleſs we trace up all being, and all

all philoſophic motion, whether active motion, or paſſive, to God himſelf; we can have no central point to ſtop at, but ſhall be loſt amid the immenſe circumference of boundleſs, wild uncertainty.

ON the ſubject of liberty and neceſſity, I acknowledge that there is ſuch a thing as free-will in God's reaſonable creatures; and, I believe, every Calviniſt upon earth acknowledges the ſame. The point, in diſpute between us and the Arminians, is, not concerning the exiſtence of free-will, but concerning its powers. That man is naturally endued with a will, we never denied; and that man's will is naturally free to what is morally and ſpiritually evil, we always affirmed. The grand hinge, then, on which the debate turns, is, whether free-will be, or be not, a faculty of ſuch ſovereignty and power, as either to ratify, or to baffle, the ſaving grace of God, according to its, that is, according to the will's own independent pleaſure and ſelf-determination? I ſhould imagine, that every man of ſenſe, piety, and reflection, muſt, at once, determine this queſtion in the negative. If ſome do not, who are nevertheleſs poſſeſſed of thoſe qualifications, I can only ſtand amazed at the force of that prejudice, which can induce any reaſonable and religious perſon to ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe that divine wiſdom is fruſtrable, and the divine power defeatable, by creatures of yeſterday, who are abſolutely and conſtantly dependent on God for their very being, and, conſequently, for the whole of their operations, from moment to moment.

IF free-will was poſſeſſed of thoſe enormous powers, which the Arminian ſcheme ſuppoſes, it would be vain and idle in a man to pray to God for victory over temptation, or to give him thanks for victory obtained. When free-willers kneel down to petition God for any ſpiritual bleſſing, what is ſuch conduct, but a virtual renunciation of their own diſtinguiſhing tenet? And on the footing of that tenet, what an unmeaning ſervice is the aſcription of praiſe.

Away with prayer. Away with thankſgiving. Neither the one, nor the other, has any reaſonable pretext to keep it in countenance on ſuch principles. The whole lower creation cannot exhibit a more glaring example of human inconſiſtency, than a free-willer on his knees.

THE prophecies of the Old and New Teſtaments are ſuch a proof of chriſtianity, as all the infidels in the world will never be able

able to overthrow; ſo, on the other hand, thoſe ſame prophecies conclude, to the full, as ſtrongly in favour of peremptory predeſtination. For, if the events were undecreed, they would be unforeknown; and if unforeknown, they could not be infallibly predicted. To ſay, that events may be foreknown, without falling under any effective or permiſſive decree, would be ſaying either nothing to the purpoſe, or worſe than nothing. For, if God can, with certainty, foreknow any event whatever, which he did not previouſly determine to accompliſh or permit; and that event, barely foreknown, but entirely undecreed, be ſo certainly future, as to furniſh poſitive ground for unerring prophecy; it would follow, that God is dependent, for his knowledge, on the things known; inſtead of all things being dependent on him; and, that there is ſome extraneous concatenation of cauſes, prior to the will and knowledge of God, by which his will is regulated, and on which his knowledge is founded.

IT is not neceſſary to be timid in order to be meek. There is a falſe meekneſs, as well as a falſe charity. Genuine charity, according to the Apoſtle's deſcription of it, rejoiceth in the truth. The conduct of our Lord himſelf, and of the firſt diſciples, on various

various occaſions, demonſtrated, that it is no part of chriſtian candour, to hew mill-ſtones with a feather. The Apoſtle ſaid, concerning the depravers of doctrinal chriſtianity, Rebuke them ſharply, or as it may be read, rebuke them cuttingly. Wiſh well to their perſons, but give no quarter to their errors. Unmixed politeneſs, condeſcending generoſity, and the moſt conciliatory benevolence, can no more ſoften rugged rudeneſs, than the melody of David's harp could lay the north wind, or ſtill the raging of the ſea.

IT is no novelty for the doctrines of grace to meet with oppoſition; and, indeed, few doctrines have been ſo much oppoſed as they. Such is the imperfect ſtate of things below, that the moſt important advantages are connected with ſome inconveniences. The ſhining of truth, like the ſhining of the ſun, wakens inſects into life, which, otherwiſe, would have no ſenſitive exiſtence. Yet, better for a few inſects to quicken, than for the ſun not to ſhine.

DAVID appears to have had, almoſt from his very childhood, the ſublimeſt talents for poetry, and an exquiſite taſte in muſic. His harp, therefore, was, probably, his

his frequent companion in the fields, when he exerciſed the occupation of a ſhepherd. And having experienced the ineſtimable bleſſing of early converſion, he did not debaſe his poetic genius, nor proſtitute his ſkill in the harmony of ſounds, by devoting either of them to the contemptible purpoſes of verſified nonſenſe and unmanly diſſipation; but his heart being as rightly tuned as his harp, his happineſs and higheſt recreation were, to ſing the praiſes of the God he loved, and to anticipate ſomething of that ſublime employ, on earth, which will, in heaven, be, for ever, the buſineſs and the bliſs of thoſe who are redeemed from among men.

It is worthy of remark, that this was the time (namely, while David was herdſman to his father Jeſſe, and filled up the intervals of his employment with holy meditation, prayer, and thankſgiving), when God himſelf vouchſafed to mention him under the moſt glorious appellation that, perhaps, was ever conferred on a created being; a man after my own heart. A title, which does not appear to have been given him, ſo much as once, after his advancement to royalty. For though neither height of magnificence, nor depth of abaſement, can ſeparate a ſaint from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; yet, even after a work of grace has

* Rom. viii. 39.

paſſed

paſſed upon the heart in regeneration, ſuch is the power of ſurviving depravity, that not one, perhaps, in twenty, of God's people, can, humanly ſpeaking, be truſted with proſperity. Let every afflicted believer, therefore, rejoice in that he is made low. God deals out our comforts and our ſorrows, with exact, unerring hand, in number, weight, and meaſure. Hence, we have not, either of joy or adverſity, a grain too little or too much. If leſs tribulation would ſuffice, leſs would be given. We are bad enough, with all our troubles: what then ſhould we be, if we were exerciſed with none?

When I read the eighth Pſalm I form to myſelf an idea* of David the ſtripling, and think I ſee him, watching his flocks, in a ſummer's night, under the expanded canopy of the ſkies.—The air is ſtill. The heavens are ſerene. The moon, arrived at the full, is purſuing her majeſtic, ſilent courſe. The ſtars (like peereſſes on a coronation ſolemnity) aſſume their brighteſt robes, to attend the beauteous ſovereign of the night, while both moon and ſtars concur to ſhed a ſoft undazzling luſtre on all the ſubjacent landſcape. David, at this happy period, a blameleſs youth; unpoiſoned with ambition, and unfaſcinated by the witchcraft of court-corruption; his heart unpolluted with luſt, and his hands undipped in blood; is ſeated on a riſing

* See the Frontiſpiece.

hillock,

hillock, or on the protuberant root of ſome ſtately tree.—All is huſhed. Not a bough ruſtles. Not a leaf "trembles to the breeze." The ſilent flocks are either careleſsly grazing by his ſide, or ſlumbering ſecurely at his feet. The birds have ſuſpended their ſongs, until waked by ſuperior ſweetneſs of his voice, and the muſic of his hand. For, charmed with the lovelineſs of the ſcene, and wrapt by the holy ſpirit into a ſeraphic flame of exalted devotion, he has lain aſide his crook—he has taken up his harp—and is tranſmitting, to the throne of God, theſe grateful, theſe inexpreſſibly beautiful ſtrains of admiring thankfulneſs: When I conſider the heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and ſtars, which thou haſt ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him?—Then taking a ſurvey of the pleaſing objects that ſurrounded him, he thus goes on to ſing: Thou haſt made man a little lower than the angels, and hath crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madeſt him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou haſt put all things under his feet; all ſheep and oxen, yea, and the beaſts of the field; the fowls of the air, and the fiſhes of the ſea, and whatſoever walketh through the paths of the ſeas. O Lord our governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world!

So warbled the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael, and thus he addreſſed God the Son, almoſt eleven hundred years prior to his incarnation.

EVEN in the worſt and darkeſt of times, God has never left himſelf entirely without witneſs, nor permitted the truths of his goſpel to be totally exterminated. They have, ſometimes, lain to all outward appearance, in very few hands: but they have conſtantly ſubſiſted ſomewhere. The prophet Elijah once imagined, that himſelf was the only perſon who was kept faithful to God, amidſt that torrent of idolatry, which then overwhelmed the land of Iſrael. But what ſaid the anſwer of God unto him? I have reſerved to myſelf ſeven thouſand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even ſo then, at this preſent time alſo there is, and at every time there has been and ſhall be, a remnant, according to the election of grace. However diſcouraging appearances may be, in ſeaſons either of perſecution, idolatry, or general profaneneſs, there are many known inſtances of divine preſervation; and many others, unknown by us, but noticed by him who knoweth them that are his.

IN

IN this country, when the ſword of perſecution was unſheathed and brandiſhed, thoſe Proteſtants, whoſe eyes God had opened, went cheerfully to death for the *doctrines* of Chriſt, and could ſing, with thoſe of old, for thy ſake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as ſheep appointed to be ſlain. But now the ſword is laid aſleep, and the fires are extinguiſhed, the doctrines of Chriſt are too generally forgot; nay, what is ſtill more ſhocking, the very *mention* of thoſe doctrines ſeems to frighten ſome nominal Proteſtants out of their wits. If we have loſt the perſecutions, we have alſo in a manner loſt the ſpirit and faith of our chriſtian predeceſſors.

WHEN God was pleaſed to viſit this land with the beams of the Reformation, Paul's Croſs, which was ſituated in the church-yard belonging to the cathedral of St. Paul, on the north ſide of that church, towards the eaſt end, might be called the city fountain, from which the ſtream of the pureſt doctrine repleniſhed the metropolis, and the kingdom. Here, our great reformers preached, in the days of Edward the Good; and here, the great reſtorers of the reformed doctrines continued to diſpenſe the waters of life, through the long reign of Elizabeth. There are three diſtinguiſhed,

I had almoſt ſaid ſacred ſpots of ground, which, I think, no genuine, conſiderate Engliſhman can ſurvey, without ſome emotion of awful rapture. I mean, that part of St. Paul's Church-yard, which was beautified by the feet of the reformers; Smithfield, from whence ſo many of our Proteſtant Elijahs aſcended, in chariots of flame, to glory; and Runny-mead, adjoining to Egham, where the ſignature of the Great Charter was extorted from King John.

LET a man eſpouſe what ſyſtem he will, he muſt unavoidably diſpleaſe ſome party or other. But the man, who affects to adopt ſuch a ſyſtem, as may render him obnoxious to no party whatever, very rarely acquires that meaſure of eſteem, from any, which he fondly expects to receive from all.

GOD's revealed, not his ſecret will, is the rule of human action; we are not to deſcend from the decree to events; but, on the contrary, ſhould aſcend, from events, to the decree. God's hidden will of determination is and can be the rule of his own conduct only, becauſe he only is acquainted with his own purpoſes in their full extent; but the grand, unerring chart of direction to men, and

and on which they ſhould conſtantly fix their eyes, is God's declared will of command, ſet forth in the written word.

SCHOLASTIC niceties, when puſhed to exceſs, are directly oppoſite to the genius of the goſpel; and open the way, not to chriſtian knowledge, but to the endleſs mazes of ſophiſtry and ſtrife of words.

WHILE Calvin was a very young man, diſputes ran high between Luther and ſome other reformers, concerning the manner of Chriſt's preſence in the holy ſacrament. Luther, whoſe temper was naturally warm and rough, heaped many hard names on the divines who differed from him on the article of conſubſtantiation; and, among the reſt, Calvin came in for his dividend of abuſe. Being informed of the harſh appellations he received, he meekly replied, in a letter to Bullinger, It is a frequent ſaying with me, that, if Luther ſhould even call me a devil, my veneration for him is, notwithſtanding, ſo great, that I ſhall ever acknowledge him to be an illuſtrious ſervant of God; who, though he abounds in extraordinary virtues, is yet not without conſiderable imperfections.

I SEE not much reaſon for abſolutely caſhiering the epithet of irreſiſtible grace; though I could wiſh, that the term invincible were always ſubſtituted in its room. Irreſiſtible may ſeem to imply ſome compulſive force on the will of man, in regeneration; whereas, we neither aſſert, nor believe, that the will is violently compelled, but only that it is effectually changed for the better, without any violation of its natural freedom. An elect ſinner is not made good, againſt his will; but is by grace, made willing to be good; according to that of the Pſalmiſt, "Thy people ſhall be willing, in the day of thy power," Pſalm cx. 3. Though the effect of the holy ſpirit's operation is infallibly ſecured, and cannot but iſſue in converſion, for he does nothing in vain; yet is this bleſſed effect accompliſhed, in a way ſuitable to the natural powers wherewith man is endued; by irreſiſtible, therefore, if you underſtand grace that is efficacious, invincible, and certainly victorious; we are authorized, both by ſcripture, reaſon, and the ſtricteſt maxims of philoſophy, to term converting grace irreſiſtible; ſince, where God really deſigns to renew a ſinner unto righteouſneſs and true holineſs, we think it incompatible with every notion of Deity, to ſuppoſe, that the intent of an all-wiſe Being ſhould be eventually defeated, and his plan diſconcerted; or that the meaſures made uſe of by an Almighty agent,

agent, ſhould be baffled and iſſue in nothing. Neither can we apprehend, that a deity of this infinite wiſdom and infinite power, who is "excellent in counſel, and mighty in working," can ever find himſelf at a loſs how to carry his immutable purpoſes, whether of grace or providence, into execution; or be unable to operate effectually on the wills of men; without treſpaſſing on that freedom, of which he himſelf is the author and giver. Surely, he who, without our conſent, made us reaſonable beings, can, by virtue of his own omnipotently transforming grace, make us holy beings! and that without making us mere machines. He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? He that made the eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that endued me with natural freedom, cannot he renew this will of mine, without infringement of the freedom he gave us.

UNLESS we trace up all being, and all philoſophic motion, whether active motion or paſſive, to God himſelf, we can find no firſt cauſe, wherein to reſt; we can have no central point to ſtop at, but ſhall be loſt amid the immenſe circumference of boundleſs, wild uncertainty.

THE

THE operation of grace renders itſelf effectual, without offering the leaſt violence to the human mind. Open a blind man's eyes to ſee the ſun, and he will need no compulſion to make him admire it. Suppoſe there was a perſon, to whoſe ceaſeleſs bounty you owed every comfort you enjoy, but of whom, notwithſtanding, you never had ſo much as the ſight. Should that perſon, in proceſs of time, favour you with a viſit, would you ſtand in need of compulſion, to make you ſpeak to him? Muſt you be dragged by the hair of your head, into his preſence? No. You would, at once, fly to him, and bid him welcome. You would, freely, yet irreſiſtibly, (ſuch is the ſweetly captivating power of gratitude) thank him, and give him your beſt accommodations, and wiſh your beſt were better for his ſake. Similar is the free, though neceſſary, tendency of an enlightened ſoul to God and Chriſt; it diſclaims all compulſion, properly ſo called. It pleads only for that victorious, conciliating efficacy, which is inſeparable from the grace of divine attraction; and acknowledges no other energy, but that to which the apoſtle ſets his atteſtation, where he ſays, the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.

IN a world like the preſent, it is often extremely difficult to connect integrity with prudence

prudence. The man who will be honeſt, muſt run ſome riſque.

I ONCE devoted a conſiderable ſhare of time and attention to the fathers. But, I ſcruple not to acknowledge, that, after a while, I deſiſted from this ſtudy, as barren and unimproving. Some excellent things are, indeed, interſperſed in their writings; but the golden grains are almoſt loſt amidſt an infinity of rubbiſh. If a man, ſays Dr. Young, was to find one pearl in an oyſter of a million, it would hardly encourage him to commence fiſherman for life. So ſay I, of the fathers in general. Even ſuppoſing, what I can by no means grant, that the harveſt of inſtruction would recompence the toil of breaking up the ground, a life time would hardly ſuffice to read the fathers with care; and perhaps, two life times would ſcarcely enable a reader to digeſt them compleatly. That knowledge which is truly important, lies in a much narrower compaſs.

PERSONS of violent paſſions, who, if hurried away by the impetuous torrent, either of exceſſive and unguarded anger, or of head-ſtrong and irregular deſire, are liable to the commiſſion of irreparable evil,

evil, and may in a ſingle moment lay the foundation of irremediable ruin. He that haſteth with his feet, ſinneth. O believer, if thou art by nature haſty, vehement, and eaſily inflammable, call in ſuperior aid. He who, in the days of his fleſh, rebuked the raging of the winds, and ſtilled the toſſings of the ſea, can, by the ſweet compeſcing influence of his gracious ſpirit, reſtrain thee within the bounds of holineſs, and ſpeak the ſtorm into a perfect calm. I have read of an heathen, who, when he found himſelf unduly fermented by the kindlings of inward wrath, would never utter a ſingle word, until he had firſt deliberately run over in his mind all the letters of the alphabet. I have read of a Chriſtian, who, when endangered by ſimilar temptation, would not ſuffer himſelf to ſpeak a ſyllable, until he had ſilently repeated the Lord's Prayer. Go, and do thou likewiſe. Repeat that prayer to God, in the ſpirit of ſupplication; and thy victory over paſſion will be more than probable.

LET men be vigilant in their ſtations, and faithful to their truſt. Above all, let miniſters of Chriſt not ſleep, as do others; but watch, as thoſe that muſt give account of their ſtewardſhip to the Judge of quick and

and dead. It is ſaid of Ariſtotle, that, leſt he ſhould impede his progreſs in his philoſophical ſtudies, by over-ſleeping himſelf, he uſually ſlept with one hand out of bed, and held a braſs ball in it, over a veſſel of the ſame metal: that the noiſe, which the ball muſt occaſion when it fell from his hand, might awake him to what he deemed the principal buſineſs of human life. In how many reſpects may heathen diligence put Chriſtian ſlothfulneſs to the bluſh!

THE adorable Saviour of ſinners is, in Scripture, figuratively ſhadowed forth to our conceptions, by an idea taken from the brighteſt of viſible objects. "The Lord God is a ſun and ſhield; he will give, to his choſen people, the light and warmth of grace, below, and crown that grace with perfection of glory, in the heaven of heavens, above (Pſal. lxxxiv. 11.)." And the Father's endearing promiſe, made and fulfilled to each ſpiritually awakened ſinner, is, "To you, that fear my name, ſhall the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe, with healing in his beams. Mal. iv. 2."

How extremely ſmall the material ſun appears, in compariſon of its real magnitude! Who, that is guided merely by his

his naked eye, would ſuppoſe that luminary to be, what in fact it is, not leſs than a million of times larger, than our whole extenſive globe of earth and ſeas! When purblind reaſon takes upon her, to ſit in judgment on the myſterious nature, decrees, and diſpenſations of God, ſhe reſembles the ſhort-ſighted optics of an unlettered Indian, who, eſtimating the ſize of the ſun, by his own inadequate perceptions, imagines it to be of much leſs circumference than the floor of his hut; and, was a philoſopher to apprize him of his miſtake, would aſk, with an unbelieving ſtare, if not with a contemptuous ſmile, How can theſe things be? Between the ſun's real and apparent dimenſions, ſome, though exceeding little, proportion obtains. But, when the ſecond perſon in the godhead deigned to cloath himſelf with mortality, his appearance bore no proportion to his infinite and eſſential dignity. Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of Mary? was the deciſion of unilluminated reaſon. The eye of ſupernatural faith, alone, was able to ſee through the human veil, diſcern the latent Deity, and behold his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

WHEREFORE, O my ſoul, are the glorious things of God, and the important concerns

concerns of futurity, no greater in thy view? Becauſe the remains of original corruption ſtill keep thee at ſome diſtance from thy maſter; and hinder thee from ſeeing eternal realities, in the momentous light they deſerve. Why do the periſhing intereſts of time appear ſo great? Becauſe we are immediately converſant with them; and they have, naturally, too deep a place in our vile affections. Milton repreſents the ſeraph Uriel, as dwelling in the ſun. Was this, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, our caſe; were our hearts right with God, and could we conſtantly walk in the near, uninterrupted light of his bleſſed countenance; how would the world dwindle in our eſteem? What a ſpeck, what a comparative nothing, would it appear!

WHEN Chriſt, in his fulneſs of mediatorial beauty and grandeur, riſes on the ſoul of a benighted ſinner. In our phariſaical and unconverted ſtate (a ſtate of tenfold deeper than Egyptian darkneſs); our good works, as we are apt flatteringly to ſtyle them, charms us with their petty, evanid radiance,

"As ſtars, from abſent ſuns, have leave to ſhine."

But no ſooner is Jeſus, by the internal agency of his ſpirit, revealed in our hearts,

and his completely finiſhed obedience diſcovered to the eye of faith, than we ceaſe going about to eſtabliſh our own righteouſneſs, and joyfully ſubmit to the imputed righteouſneſs of the incarnate God. Self-excellence and ſelf-dependence vaniſh, in that bleſſed moment; and the language of the ſoul is, "Thy merits, O thou Redeemer of the loſt, are all my ſalvation; and an intereſt in thee, is all my deſire."

THE ordinances of the goſpel are to be numbered among thoſe ſtreams, which gladden the Church of God, if, and when, he makes them the vehicles of his own preſence and power to the ſoul. Abſtracted from the converting and cheriſhing operations of the Holy Ghoſt, the beſt means of grace would infallibly leave us (as a ſunleſs atmoſphere would leave the earth) no leſs cold and unanimated, than they found us.

THE ſhinings of Chriſt's preſence on the ſoul give exiſtence, and gradual maturity, to the inward graces that enrich the heart, and to the peaceable works of righteouſneſs which adorn the life, of every true believer in his name.

SOME

SOME perſons would perſuade us, that God regulates his decrees, by the free-will (or, in a yet more impious phraſe of theirs, by the ſelf-determined conduct) of the creatures he has made. This is juſt as abſurd, in theology, as it would be falſe, in philoſophy, to aſſert, that the ſun dances round the earth, inſtead of the earth's circuiting the ſun. Scripture expreſsly aſſures us, that the way of man is not in himſelf; neither is it in man that walketh, to direct his own ſteps: Jer. x. 23. God does not, like a dependent lacquey in a livery, adjuſt his motions by ours; but human conduct is adjuſted and regulated (either permiſſively, or effectively, according to the nature of the caſe) by the wiſe determinations of his ſovereign and undefeatable will. He, as an uncreated and all-pervading ſun, is the centre of the univerſal ſyſtem: while the whole choir of created beings, without a ſingle exception, perform their allotted planetary revolutions, to the ultimate glory of that God, "whoſe never-failing providence" (as the Church of England finely expreſſes it) "ordereth all things, both in heaven and earth."

LIGHT does not travel from the ſun, ſo ſwiftly, as the quickened bodies of the ſaints ſhall riſe into glory, honour, and

immortality, when the Saviour of man ſhall appear, and the arch-angel's trumpet ſound. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed.

THE believer has his winter ſeaſons, of providential affliction, and of ſpiritual diſtreſs. At ſuch periods, his views are occaſionally dark, and his comforts liable to a temporary chill. Yet, if the God of love is ever peculiarly near to his people for good, it is when his arrows ſtick faſt in them, and when his hand preſſeth them ſore. Behold, God is in this place, and I knew it not; was the retroſpective experience of Jacob. While the ſpiritual winter laſts, be it thy endeavour to exerciſe, what a late excellent perſon terms, "The winter graces of faith and patience." At the time appointed, thy conſolations ſhall return, as the clear ſhining after rain; and thy joy be as the ſun, when it goeth forth in its might. Then will be realized that elegant and reviving delineation of inward ſummer and proſperity of ſoul: the winter [of doubts and darkneſs, of pain and ſorrow, of affliction and temptation, of coldneſs and barrenneſs, of ſtorm and toſſing] is paſt; the rain [of weeping and diſtreſs] is over and gone.

gone. The flowers [of peace and holy rejoicing] appear on the earth; the time of the ſinging of birds [when thy graces ſhall be all alert and lively, and thou ſhalt pray and praiſe with enlargement] is come; and the voice of the turtle [the ſtill, ſmall muſic of the Holy Spirit's voice, whiſpering peace to the conſcience] is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs [fruitfulneſs in every good word and work ſhall evidence thy revival in grace]; and the vines, with the tender grapes, impart their fragrancy; thy amiable and benevolent tempers, accompanied by all the other lovely effects of communion with God, ſhall juſtify thy faith to the world, and viſibly adorn thy profeſſion of the goſpel of Chriſt. Cantic. ii. 11, 12, 13.

Yet, though favoured with this happy and glorious experience, you muſt not expect (at leaſt, it is not the lot of every believer) to enjoy ſummer all the year round. But, however this be, an eternity is coming, when thy ſun ſhall no more go down, neither ſhall thy moon withdraw itſelf; for the Lord ſhall be thy everlaſting light, and the days of thy mourning ſhall be ended. Iſai. lx. 20.

HOW univerſal is the all-directing providence of God. Nothing is exempted

from its notice; nothing is excepted from its controul. Chance, like abſolute darkneſs, has no real exiſtence. If ſome events ſeem fortuitous, it is becauſe we have not a ſufficiency of knowledge, by which to trace the chain of combinations that neceſſarily produced them; juſt as ſome places, and ſome ſeaſons, ſeem totally dark to us; becauſe our optic ſyſtem is ſo framed and attempered, that, on various occaſions, the human eye is unable to collect thoſe ſcattered and proportionably expanded rays, from which no place whatever is entirely ſecluded.

THE remaining corruptions of a regenerated heart dim the proſpect of ſalvation, and damp the fervour of inherent grace. Nothing can again brighten the former, and warm the latter into lively exerciſe, but the ſplendour of God's repeated riſing on the ſoul. Happy it is, for his benighted people, that, as miſts and clouds may ſeem to obſcure the ſun, but cannot extinguiſh him; nor even hinder the acceſs of his rays, beyond a certain time; ſo that faithful Jehovah, who knows what is in man, and who is ſtill greater, [in mercy and power] than our hearts can be in point of ſinful depravation, will finally ſubdue our iniquities, ſhine away our fears, purify us from

from all our droſs, and perfectly conform us to the image of his holineſs.

REMEMBER, that, in all our varying frames of ſoul, the variations are not in God, but in ourſelves. Remember, that you muſt be low at his feet, if you would baſk in the ſhinings of his face. Get above his word and ordinances, and no wonder if the horror of a great darkneſs fall upon you.

GOD's paternal attributes, on one hand, and his terrific perfections on the other, encourage us to draw nigh to him, as the everlaſting lover of our ſouls; theſe reſtrain us from preſumptuous familiarities, and from taking undue liberties, with him who is glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, and whoſe greatneſs knows no limit.

THE power of God, conſidered as exerted in and for his believing people, becomes a gracious medium of their preſent and eternal felicity. But that ſome adorable attribute, when ſet in array againſt reprobate angels and men, burns as a fire which none can quench. Who knoweth the

the power of thy wrath? And oh, how irreſiſtibly will that power be made manifeſt, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that believe not the goſpel!

HOW great is the difference between a cool, hiſtorical faith, that floats in a contemplative head, and the faith of God's elect, which warms, invigorates, and purifies the heart. The former is a mere moon-light faith, which, however clear, ſo far as it goes, yet leaves us as cold, and as barren, as it found us. The latter, like the ſolar communications, enlivens and fertilizes the ſoul; filling it with joy and peace, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt; and adorning it with the gems, and flowers, and fruits, of grace.

St. Paul finely illuſtrates the eternal generation of Chriſt, by a grand idea, taken from the material ſun. The paſſage I refer to, is Heb. i. 3. where our adorable ſurety is ſtyled, the forth-beaming of the Father's glory. Perhaps no other object, in the whole compaſs of nature, could have ſupplied the apoſtle with a piece of imagery, equally majeſtic, delicate, and juſt. Light proceeds from the ſun, and yet the ſun never exiſted without light. Chriſt is at once

once the begotten of the Father, and co-eternal with him. The ſun's rays, or unintermitting efflux of light, are of the ſame nature with the ſun itſelf; and Chriſt is a perſon in the ſame eſſence with the Father Almighty, and joint partaker of all his lovely, glorious, and infinite attributes. Could light be exterminated from the ſun, the ſun itſelf, as ſuch, would inevitably be deſtroyed; and to deny the deity of Jeſus is, virtually, to deny the exiſtence of God. For whoſoever denieth the Son, hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father alſo.

BY whom are the planets ſupported? and whoſe hand impels them, with never-ceaſing rapidity, round the central ocean of fire? They are ſupported, and impelled, by that very perſon, whoſe human ſoul was made an offering for ſin; and whoſe hands were nailed to the ignominious tree. By him, all things conſiſt, or are held together; Col. i. 17.—He both ſuſtains, and carries, all things, by the word of his own power (Heb. i. 3.): he upholds the entire univerſe of ſuns and worlds; and, by the omnipotency of his ſovereign will, he carries the rolling worlds round their reſpective ſuns.

SOME

SOME of God's converted people are ſoon matured for glory, by their nearneſs to, and intimate communion with, the ſun of righteouſneſs. Theſe are, frequently, known to out-run their brethren, and (like John at the tomb of our Lord) to reach the ſepulchre, finiſh their courſe, and aſcend to their maſter's joy, at a very early period. While other ſaints, who either do not ripen ſo faſt, or who have a larger field of uſefulneſs to occupy on earth, are detained from their crown, until they are full of years and good works. Each of theſe is gathered, as a ſhock of corn, in its ſeaſon. O believer, if thy God ſummon thee away betimes, his ſpirit will firſt perfect that which concerneth thee; nor will Providence apply the ſickle, until grace has made thee white for the harveſt. Or, if he lengthened thy thread, having much for thee to do, and much to ſuffer, he will ſhew himſelf the God of thy old age, and not forſake thee when thou art grey-headed; for he hath inviolably declared, Even to your old age, I am he; and, even to hoary hairs, will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. Iſa. xlvi. 4. Remember, to thy great and endleſs comfort, that

"His ev'ry word of grace is ſtrong,
As that which built the ſkies;
The voice, that rolls the ſtars along,
Spake all the promiſes."

AS

AS all the planets perform their revolutions, without intermiſſion, ſo, they make the end of one revolution the beginning of another. They are never languid, never fatigued. They renew their beauteous toil, again, and again: nor will ever ſtop, until the archangel ſwears, by him who liveth from eternity to eternity, that time ſhall be no longer.—Equally intenſe, uninterrupted, and unwearied, the obedience of Adam was, ere ſin profaned the temple of the ſoul. Such, too, the obedience of the elect angels has been, and is, to this very moment. Such, moreover, the true believer, on earth, wiſhes (but wiſhes, alas, in vain) to pay his Lord. And ſuch ſhall the obedience, both of ſaints and of angels, for ever be, in the paradiſe of God.

"Then ſhall we ſing, and never tire,
In that bleſt houſe above;
Where ſin, and fear, and pain expire,
Caſt out by perfect love.
Then not the ſun ſhall, more than I,
His Maker's will perform:
Nor ſhine with brighter purity
Nor burn with zeal ſo warm."

MANY are the ſecret acts of prayer, praiſe, faith, love, and humiliation, which true believers exerciſe towards their heavenly Father. Remote from the prying eye of

of man, they pour out their ſouls into the boſom of the Lord, and, wrapt in the comforts of his preſence, the curioſity of others wiſhes in vain to know the whole of what paſſes between God and them. As, on one hand, there are occaſions, when it is our bounden duty, for the honour of our maſter, and for the edification of our neighbour, to let our light ſhine before men; there are at times, alſo, when it behoves us to enter into our cloſets, and to ſhut the door about us, and hold ſequeſtered communion with him who ſees in ſecret. This diſtinction reminds me of a little anecdote, not entirely foreign from the ſubject. A late prelate in the North of England, had conceived ſome illiberal prejudices againſt a clergyman of his dioceſe. With intent to embarraſs the divine, his lordſhip thus addreſſed him, at a public viſitation: "Sir, you give away a great deal to the poor; but your charity is of the oſtentatious kind. You are too public, in the diſtributions of your bounty, I do not hear of any private good you do. It is all with ſound of trumpet." The anſwer was ſenſible and pertinent: "My lord, I care not how much you hear of my public charities, nor how little you hear of my private ones."

A FELLOW Chriſtian, or any conſpicuous character, may ſhine, unregarded: whereas,

whereas, if his brightneſs become, in any reſpect, clouded and overcaſt, our teleſcopes are up, our eyes in full employ, our tongues proclaim his defects; and it is well, if magnifying and multiplying glaſſes do not lend their aſſiſtance on the occaſion.

PROVIDENCE may, perhaps, caſt your lot, O Chriſtian, in a place, or fix you in a family, where you may not find any with whom you can take ſweet religious counſel, and walk in the houſe of God as brethren. Be not, however, diſheartened, neither dejectedly aſk, Who will ſhew me any good? but make the Pſalmiſt's prayer your own: Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me! If you experience continual nearneſs to God, through the ſpirit; and are irradiated and warmed by direct communion with Chriſt, no matter, whether you travel to heaven in company or alone. In the beſt ſenſe of the word, you are ſure of not being alone; for all the perſons in the godhead, and angels who miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation, are your companions and guardians, your guides and familiar friends. Nor will they ceaſe to watch over you for good, and to keep you in all your ways, until you enter the celeſtial houſe not made with hands; where you will, to all eternity, aſſociate with the innumerable aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born, who were written in heaven.

EACH believer, ſhine he ever ſo brightly, is, at preſent, ſanctified but in part; need we wonder, if, on ſome occaſions, the ſplendour of his gifts, and the radiancy of his graces, ſuffer a temporary eclipſe? At ſuch times, let our candour and forbearance have their perfect work. After a certain period, he will emerge from the ſhade, and beam forth in all the lovelineſs of his uſual luſtre; and, when the declining ſaint has ſat his appointed time in darkneſs, the Lord will again be a light unto him. Happy is that benighted ſoul, whoſe faith (for it is the peculiar buſineſs of faith's eye, to ſee in the dark) can pierce the gloom; anticipate the return of day; and long for a final approximation to the ſun of righteouſneſs, in that world of glory, where no more cloud nor darkneſs ſhall obſcure our views, tarniſh our graces, or damp our joys for ever.

BRIGHT evidences, and warm experiences, of our intereſt in Chriſt, and of the work of his ſpirit upon our ſouls, are generally the bleſſed conſequences of living near to God, and of walking cloſely with him, in all holy converſation, prayer, and watchful godlineſs. The joy and livelineſs of grace (though not grace itſelf) may be ſinned away. Spiritual comfort is a tender plant, and requires much delicacy of treatment. To be triumphant and alert in the ways of God, you muſt take equal heed of wandering, and of ſlumbering.

OUR

OUR Lord began the prayer upon earth which he now offers in heaven for his people: "Keep, through thy own name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me;" he prays, or rather demands, as the purchaſe of his death, when he ſays, "Father, I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am;" on which ground we may conclude, that all Chriſt died for, ſhall poſſeſs that crown of glory that fadeth not away. It being impoſſible that Jeſus ſhould intercede in vain. This is the foundation of the Apoſtle's challenge, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather, that is riſen again, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us." May all God's people, who have their faces Zion-ward, take encouragement from theſe things, to go forward in the name and ſtrength of the God of their ſalvation, until they arrive ſafe to the manſions of bliſs, and endleſs felicity.

WHEN the ſilver cords of life looſen apace, —when the laſt pins of the earthly tabernacle are taking out,—when the lips of the expiring ſaint turn pale, and the bluſh forſakes his cheek, and what little breath he draws returns cold,—when his limbs quiver, —when the pulſe forgets to beat,—when the crimſon current in his veins begins to ſtag-

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OUR Lord began the prayer upon earth which he now offers in heaven for his people: "Keep, through thy own name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me;" he prays, or rather demands, as the purchaſe of his death, when he ſays, "Father, I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am;" on which ground we may conclude, that all Chriſt died for, ſhall poſſeſs that crown of glory that fadeth not away. It being impoſſible that Jeſus ſhould intercede in vain. This is the foundation of the Apoſtle's challenge, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather, that is riſen again, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us." May all God's people, who have their faces Zion-ward, take encouragement from theſe things, to go forward in the name and ſtrength of the God of their ſalvation, until they arrive ſafe to the manſions of bliſs, and endleſs felicity.

WHEN the ſilver cords of life looſen apace, —when the laſt pins of the earthly tabernacle are taking out,—when the lips of the expiring ſaint turn pale, and the bluſh forſakes his cheek, and what little breath he draws returns cold,—when his limbs quiver, —when the pulſe forgets to beat,—when the crimſon current in his veins begins to ſtag-

nate, and the hovering ſoul is juſt on the wing for glory,—faſt as the world darkens upon his ſight, faſt as the mortal part of his compoſition ſubſides and falls off from the diſimpriſoned ſpirit; he brightens into the perfect image of God, and kindles into more than an angel of light. Jehovah viſits him with ſmiles of everlaſting love: Jeſus beckons him to regions of eternal day; the bleſſed ſpirit of God wafts him, with a gentle gale, over the ſtream of death. The angelic potentates deem it an honour to uſher the ranſomed ſoul, and convoy the precious freight. Diſembodied ſaints, who were landed long before, throng the bliſsful coaſt, to congratulate the new born ſeraph on his ſafe arrival. When a believer lands in glory, the whole church triumphant may be ſuppoſed to welcome the new-admitted peer. He makes a public entry into the celeſtial city, the Jeruſalem which is above.

Under ſuch comfortable anticipations of the glory that ſhall be revealed, when faith pierces within the veil, whither Jeſus our forerunner is gone before, the believer cries out, O how amiable is even this diſtant proſpect of thy dwelling, thou Lord of hoſts! Or, in the language of the ſpies of old, We have ſeen the land; and, behold, it is very good. When ſhall we drop theſe mortal bodies? When ſhall we get through the deſart? When ſhall we go up and take poſſeſſion? When ſhall we receive the

the end of our faith, even the full ſalvation of our ſouls? How long, O Lord, holy and true? Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? Make haſte, my beloved, to fetch me away; and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart on the mountains of ſpices!

Fear not, thou that longeſt to be at home. A few ſteps more, and thou art there. Death to God's people, is but a ferry-boat. Every day, and every hour, the boat puſhes off with ſome of the ſaints, and returns for more. Soon, O believer, it will be ſaid to thee, as it was to her in the goſpel, The maſter is come, and calleth for thee. When you are got to the boundary of your race below, and ſtand on the verge of heaven, and the confines of immortality; then there will be nothing, but the ſhort valley of death, between you and the promiſed land; the labours of your pilgrimage will then be on the point of concluſion, and you will have nothing to do, but to intreat God, as Moſes did, I pray thee let me go over, and ſee the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon. Or with David, O ſend out thy light and truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling place.

Be not diſmayed at the proſpect of getting home. Where is the man that would be ſorry to be ejected from a cottage, in

order to his living in a palace? and yet death to a child of God is but a writ of ejectment, that turns him out of a priſon, and tranſmits him to his apartments at court. Dread not the interjacent valley; it is but the ſhadow of death; and what is there, in a ſhadow, to be afraid of? Dark as it may ſeem, it will brighten as you enter; and the farther you go, the brighter will it prove. I have known many a believer go weeping to the river of death; but I never knew a believer go weeping all the way through it. Even an earthly parent is particularly tender and careful of a dying child. Much more will the great and gracious Father of the elect, ſupport, cheriſh, and defend his own children in the hour of death. Believers ſhould not have a ſlaviſh dread of death, for where is the infant, that is afraid to go to ſleep in its nurſe's arms.

Doſt thou aſk, O converted reader, which is beſt? To be taken to heaven by ſudden death in a moment or two; or to be thrown on a lingering bed, and ſo, if the Lord pleaſe, be able to bear ſome teſtimony to his love, power, and faithfulneſs? I anſwer; leave the whole matter to him. If poſſible, do not entertain a wiſh, either one way, or the other. Be this your petition:

Only receive my ſoul to thee;
The manner, and the time, be thine.

Or,

Or, are you afraid of what you may ſuffer in your laſt conflict? Turn again to your reſt; for the Lord will deal bountifully with you, and be better to you than your fears.

" ——— Who can take
Death's portrait true?
Fear ſhakes the pencil; fancy loves exceſs;
Dark ignorance is laviſh of her ſhades;
And theſe the formidable picture draw.
Man forms a death that nature never made.
Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
And feels a thouſand deaths in fearing one."

None returns from the grave, to tell us what it is to die. Some happy believers have, indeed, ſung, in their laſt moments, O Death, where is thy once imagined ſting? Can this be termed dying? And very probably, the paſſage is both ſweeter and ſmoother than living imagination is apt to ſuppoſe. I loſt an excellent pariſhioner, in the year 1765. Though he had not the leaſt doubt of his ſalvation, but, as far as ſpiritual and eternal things were concerned, lay, for many weeks, triumphing in the full aſſurance of faith; he ſtill dreaded the ſeparation of ſoul and body, from an apprehenſion of what nature muſt endure in the parting ſtroke. Some little time before the knot was actually

actually untied, God was pleaſed to indulge him with a foretaſte of death. He was, for near an hour, quite gone, in appearance; and his family began to conclude, that the final ſtruggle was over. By degrees, however, he came to himſelf; and on my aſking him, how he did, he anſwered, that God had given him a ſpecimen of death, and he found it not ſo terrible as he apprehended. From that period, all his dread of dying vaniſhed away; and he continued, without any ſhadow of fear, filled with the peace which paſſeth all underſtanding, until his diſimpriſoned ſpirit flew to the boſom of God. Oh then, whoever thou art, that art troubled in like manner, caſt thy burden on the Lord. You have found him faithful, in other things; and you may ſafely truſt him for this. He has delivered you, in ſix troubles, and in the ſeventh he will be nigh unto you. The water floods ſhall not overflow thee, neither ſhall the deep ſwallow thee up. The rock of ages lies at the bottom of the brook; and God will give you firm footing all the way through.

As the ſetting ſun appears of greater magnitude, and his beams of richer gold, than when he is in the meridian; ſo a dying believer is, uſually, richer in experience, ſtronger in grace, and brighter in his evidences for heaven, than a living one. How ſweet for to reflect, that, though

though he is yet a ſtranger in the world of ſpirits, ſtill the world of ſpirits are no ſtrangers to him. God, his Father, is there. Chriſt, his Saviour, is there. Angels, his elect brethren, are there. Saints, who got home before him, are there; and more will follow him, every day. He has the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt for his letters of recommendation, and the Holy Spirit for his introducer. He alſo goes, upon expreſs invitation from the King of the country.

When the ſoul and body, like two boſom friends who have travelled long and far together, come to the parting place, where, like Abraham and Lot, they ſeparate, and each goes a different way, one to the grave, and the other to heaven; when death, your laſt enemy, is ſubdued, (for he is not deſtroyed, entirely, until the morning of the reſurrection dawn;) when you have got to the extremity of the vale, and have actually breathed your laſt, you will find your equipage waiting for you on the other ſide, to take you from the body, and to ſet you down at the throne of God. Angels of light, thoſe chariots and horſes of fire, attend on every expiring ſaint; and not only as guides, ſhew his diſembodied ſpirit the way to heaven, but likewiſe guard him, during the paſſage; and, it is probable, act as vehicles, to convey him thither; juſt as Lazarus was carried by

by angels into Abraham's boſom. Thus, as in life, ſo at death, does every one of God's elect experience the utmoſt accompliſhment of that promiſe, He ſhall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands ſhall they bear thee; acting, as thy inviſible ſhield, on earth; and, at laſt, as thy chariots and retinue, which ſhall convey thee to heaven. Such honour have all the ſaints. Hallelujah.

Tremble not, therefore, at the thought of laying aſide your weak, ſinful, mortal body. You will receive it again; not ſuch as it now is, frail, defiled, and periſhable, but bright with the glory, and perfect in the image of God. The body is that to the ſoul, which a garment is to the body. When you betake yourſelf to repoſe at night, you lay aſide your cloaths, until morning; and reſume them when you riſe. What is the grave, but the believers wardrobe, of which God is the door-keeper? In the reſurrection morning, the door will be thrown open, and the glorified ſoul ſhall deſcend from heaven to put on a glorified robe, which was, indeed, folded up and laid away in diſhonour; but ſhall be taken out, from the repoſitory, enriched and beautified with all the ornaments of nature and grace.

It is a comfortable reflection, that our bodies ſhall be gathered from the grave, and reſcued from the dominion of death; when

when the Lord Jeſus comes, the ſecond time, to be everlaſtingly glorified in the redemption of his people. He, whoſe voice is as the ſound of many waters, will ſay, to his angels, when he appears in the clouds of heaven, Gather my ſaints together unto me, who have made a covenant with me by ſacrifice; who died, truſting in my righteouſneſs, and depending on the merit of my blood, which I ſhed for the remiſſion of their ſins, when I offered myſelf up in ſacrifice on the croſs.

Having thus traced the Chriſtian in his ſpiritual journey, from nature to grace, and from grace to glory, let me for the preſent leave him there, and addreſs myſelf to thoſe, who, as well as myſelf, are ſtill detained in the wilderneſs, and whoſe tour is not yet finiſhed.

The readers of this addreſs, and indeed the whole world at large, may be diſtributed into *two* kinds of people, of thoſe who are travelling to the kingdom of heaven, and of thoſe who are going the direct contrary way. There are but two roads, the broad which leadeth to deſtruction, and the narrow, which opens unto life. Travellers all mankind are, and travellers at a very ſwift rate. The grand point is, *Where art thou travelling to?*

Are you deſirous of knowing, whither thy footſteps tend, and toward what country thy face is ſet? Conſult the way-

marks.

marks. Look at the directing poſt. Have recourſe to the Scriptures of truth, but ſtudy them in a ſpirit of prayer, and with the ſimplicity of a little child. Though we are not called to be apoſtles, yet all who ſhall appear with Chriſt in glory, are called to be ſaints. And what is a ſaint? One who is hallowed or ſet apart by divine grace, for the uſe and ſervice of God; one who is made a partaker of that faith which relies on the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for juſtification with God; and who is a ſubject of that holineſs, without which none ſhall ſee the Lord: one who leaves all things, ſo far as they conſiſt not with faith and good conſcience; who counts all that earth can give, but droſs and dung, when compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt, and with the privilege of being found in him; who riſes up into the moral likeneſs of God, and follows the Lord that bought him, in ſanctification of the ſpirit and belief of the truth. Such perſons have fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt; they have a manifeſt intereſt in the favour of the former, and in the merits of the latter. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, they are built up into temples of God; their grace, their peace, their joy are multiplied.

After ſurveying this picture of a ſaint,

next look into your own heart, and ſee, if you can diſcover any reſemblance of it in yourſelf; any correſponding features, any traces of the divine image there; for as face anſwers face in a glaſs, ſo the experience of one ſaint is in general nearly ſimilar to that of another. Some indeed, may have a ſtronger likeneſs of their heavenly Father, than others; but every true believer does, in a greater or leſs degree, reſemble God. Bring yourſelf therefore, now, to the teſt of God's word. Try your ſtate and experience thereby, that you may know, whoſe image and ſuperſcription you bear. Theſe are the outlines of that divine reſemblance, in a reſtoration to which conſiſt the dignity, and the happineſs, of man. Let this, then, be your prayer: Try me, O God, and ſearch the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any wickedneſs in me, any root of bitterneſs yet undiſcovered; and lead me in the way everlaſting. Shew me the true ſtate of my ſoul. Bring me out from every falſe refuge. Strip off every deceitful covering, every covering that is not of thy ſpirit. Forbid, that the anchor of my hope ſhould be caſt, or the houſe o my dependence built, on any but Chriſt, the rock of ages. Forbid, that I ſhould reſt ſhort of that repentance which is thy gift, and is connected with life eternal;

and forbid, O forbid, that I ſhould ſit down without aſpiring to that conformity unto thee in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; abſtracted from which, repentance is falſe, and faith is dead.

Such are the breathings of the ſoul that is born of God. If this, O man, be not the language of thy inmoſt heart, thou art far from Chriſt, thou art yet in thy ſins. If God the ſpirit has not kindled a groaning deſire in your breaſt, for theſe things, I dare not give you the right hand of fellowſhip. I dare not ſalute you, as one of my fellow travellers to the kingdom of God. No. You are yet in Egypt. And you will quickly be in hell, except the Holy Ghoſt take you by the hand, and take you by the heart, and lead you in Chriſt to Zion.

But if you have ground to hope, that this work of grace is experienced by you, in ſome degree; if in looking at your ſoul in the goſpel glaſs, you can diſcern the traces of faith, love, repentance, and ſanctification there; you are in the number of them who have ſet forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into that heavenly city you ſhall come.

When this happy change is effected, and the converted perſon begins to evidence his new birth, by forſaking his old companions in ſin, and by leading a new life; different people will paſs different cenſures

ſures upon his conduct. One will, without ceremony, dub him a new-faſhioned Methodiſt. Another will ſet him down for an old faſhioned Puritan. A third will roundly pronounce him a madman, that has loſt his ſenſes by being righteous over-much. A fourth, who has more politeneſs, and leſs ill-nature than the reſt, will ſay to him, I wonder how a perſon of your good ſenſe in other things, can be ſo preciſe. You will hurt your nerves, and damp your ſpirits. There is no occaſion for all this ado. Take a cheerful glaſs! Give the rein to your appetites! and make a merry life of it, though it be a ſhort one.

Thus will multitudes endeavour, by various methods, to call the traveller back, and to divert him from his Chriſtian courſe. But he ſtill holds on his way; anſwering, as he paſſes, we ſhall ſee, whoſe life will be merrieſt in the end.

Yet let not the following of Chriſt cauſe the way of truth to be ill ſpoken of, or bring an evil report on the good land, by needleſs rigour, and by affected ſeverity. Do not ſullenly reject the gifts of Providence, under a pretence of ſuperior ſanctity; but uſe them without abuſing them. If you have them not, be not anxious after them. If you have them, enjoy them in the fear, and to the glory of God. Receive, gratefully. Diſtribute, chearfully. Give

thanks, inceſſantly. When you ſet out for heaven, do not ſet up for a monk; nor look upon thoſe things as criminal, which the word of God does not declare to be ſo. Gnat ſtrainers are, too often, camel ſwallowers; and the Phariſaical mantle of ſuperſtitious auſterity is, very frequently, a cover for a cloven foot.

Take heed, however, O believer in Chriſt, of verging to the oppoſite extreme. Beware of a ſupine, lukewarm, libertine ſpirit. Watch unto prayer, guard againſt negligence. Advance not to the uttermoſt bounds of your liberty. It is a juſt remark, which I have ſomewhere met with, that the beſt way to be ſecure from falling into a well, is, not to venture too near the brink. Swim not with the ſtream, if the tide roll downward; neither follow a multitude to do evil. It is the duty of a Chriſtian, not to be aſhamed of being ſingularly good, when ſo many are not aſhamed of being eminently bad. Better go with a few, to heaven, than to go, with much and polite company, to hell. *He that fears men, and ſeeks to pleaſe men, at the expence of goſpel truths, or of good morals, is not an honeſt man, much leſs a ſervant of Chriſt.* And though in matters of mere indifference, you are not abſolutely bound to abridge your liberty as a Chriſtian; nor is it meet you ſhould affect to be good, any more than to be wiſe,

wiſe, above that which is written; yet if you find, that even things, in themſelves indifferent, prove a ſnare, an entanglement, and an hinderance to you, in running the race that is ſet before you; pluck out thoſe things, be what they may, and caſt them from you; though they be uſeful as a right hand, or tender as a right eye.

The world will endeavour to turn your feet out of the narrow way. If the wicked are ſo muzzled by Providence, that they cannot bite, they will ſnarl, at leaſt. If they cannot do you real injury, they will probably pelt you with ſcandal, and ſneer at you for being, in their opinion, righteous over-much. But let not this diſcourage you. Regard it no more, than a traveller would mind a little duſt upon his ſhoes. Imitate the blind man in the goſpel; who, the more he was exhorted by the multitude to hold his peace, cried out ſo much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. Beware of ſin. Shun the remoteſt appearance of evil. Think it not enough, to be, for the main, in the right way; but endeavour to walk ſteadily and erectly in that way. Beg the Lord therefore, to hold up your goings in his paths, that your footſteps ſlip not. Be it the language of your heart, and of your conduct, I have put off my immoral coat; how then ſhall I put it on again? I have waſhed

waſhed my feet, and almighty grace forbid that I ſhould any more defile them.

Yet, if you fall, be humbled; but do not deſpair. Pray afreſh to God, who is able to raiſe you up, and to ſet you on your feet again. Look to the blood of the covenant, and ſay to the Lord from the depth of your heart,

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myſelf in thee!
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Waſh me, Saviour, or I die.

Make theſe words of the Apoſtle your motto: Perplexed, but not in deſpair; caſt down, but not deſtroyed. It has been juſtly obſerved, that it is one thing to fall into the mire; another thing to lie in it. Away to the croſs of Chriſt, and to the ſpirit of God, for cleanſing and for healing. Your Covenant Father will then ſprinkle you from an evil conſcience, and make you recover the time and the ground you have loſt. And, when thus graciouſly reſtored, look upon ſin as the bitterest calamity that can befal you; and conſider thoſe, who would entice you to it, or be your partners in it, as the very worſt enemies you have.

Soon ſhall we arrive, where not only ſin, but every temptation to it, and every propenſity toward it, will ceaſe for ever. As a good man once ſaid on his death bed, Hold out, faith and patience! yet a little while,

while, and I ſhall need you no longer. When faith and patience have done and ſuffered their appointed work, the diſciples of Chriſt ſhall aſcend from the wilderneſs to paradiſe. With joy and gladneſs ſhall they be brought, and ſhall enter into the King's palace, ſinging, as they mount, Lift up your heads, ye celeſtial gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlaſting doors, that the heirs of glory may enter in. We are they, ſome of whom came out of great tribulation; but all of whom have waſhed our robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb. Stirred up by his effectual grace, we went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and cloathed with his righteouſneſs, and preſerved by his power, into the land of Canaan we are come. Even ſo, Amen.

FINIS.

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